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ABSTRACT This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 39 titles deal with a variety of topics, including the following: (1) the assessment of writing ability; (2) small group discussion as a prewriting activity; (3) effects of evaluation methods in learning technical writing skills; (4) the effects of prior knowledge and audience on writing; (5) teaching creative writing; (6) a study of the word processor and composing; (7) using a learning styles approach to teaching composition; (8) parent involvement in the composing processes of kindergarten children; (9) a comparison of two approaches to using writing across the curriculum; (10) sentence combining; (11) literature as equipment for writing; (12) regression in student writing performance as a function of unrecognized changes in task complexity; (13) using transparencies in a model workshop to develop learning, teaching, and writing; (14) criteria for and consistency in freshman composition evaluation; (15) the validation of the writing assessment test; (16) acquiring practical reasoning through teacher-student interaction in dialogue journals; (17) letter writing; and (18) small group writing conferences. (EL)
Teaching of Writing:

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF WRITING ABILITY FROM A DECLARATIVE/PROCEDURAL PERSPECTIVE

Order No. DA8403973

ACKERMAN, TERRY ALLAN, Ph.D. The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, 1984. 141pp. Supervisor: Professor Philip Smith

A moderate correlational relationship is often observed between subscrores from direct and indirect methods of writing assessment. Using a cognitive model of writing, specific processes are identified for each method of writing assessment. Based upon these processes, a hypothetical ordinal continuum, representing the different procedures measured by each type of assessment, is proposed. This continuum, believed to parallel the stages of writing development, is investigated using four measures of writing ability: a standardized achievement test, a transformed version of the standardized test, and two different essay tasks. Confirmatory factor analysis of the test subscores suggest that differences between the direct and indirect types of writing assessment are caused, at least partially, by the differences in the number of identifiable procedures required by each method.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION AS A PREWRITING ACTIVITY: A NATURALISTIC INQUIRY

Order No. DA8421425

Chairman: Professor John S. Mayher

This study was a naturalistic inquiry into certain sociolinguistic and composing behaviors of four average ability twelfth graders as they engaged in prewriting discussion and later performed written tasks: an essay and a story.

The inquiry focused on three areas: discourse moves, social skills, and procedures for planning and developing the written work. The participants taped recorded their discussions and were videotaped as they performed the writing. Utterances were coded for discourse moves and social skills, and the videotapes provided nonverbal data concerning physical activity and procedures during writing. At the conclusion of the double writing assignment, the researcher interviewed the participants individually to learn their understanding of their planning and developing procedures.

The participants experienced greater difficulty structuring a unified and coherent discussion for the poetic assignment (story) than for the transactional (essay). Their social skills displayed a high degree of group awareness and acceptance of individual participation.

No participant wrote an outline, and only one wrote notes. The planning and developing procedures followed a pattern in which each student formulated a theme or plot and then by a trial and error process of accretion, wrote, paused to reflect, re-read and plan.

The participants in this study displayed an incomplete understanding of the composing process. The study concludes that prewriting discussion can be a useful social activity for stimulating invention and for relieving anxiety in students as they proceed through the various phases of composing.

EFFECTS OF EVALUATION METHODS IN LEARNING TECHNICAL WRITING SKILLS

Order No. DA8425813

BRIDGE, THOMAS GAYLORD, Ph.D. University of Missouri - Columbia, 1984. 97pp. Supervisor: Dr. Franklin J. King

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to ascertain the relative effects that four selected evaluation methods would have on student's level of achievement in learning technical report writing skills. The three methods utilized were: (1) traditional teacher evaluation, (2) formal evaluation and (3) formal evaluation and computer-aided evaluation.

Method of Research: The students in the study were selected to represent the population of industrial technology majors at Western Illinois University. Data for the study were obtained by a posttest only measure of student achievement levels in learning technical report writing skills. One group was the control group and received only the traditional teacher evaluation as feedback information for their technical reports. The second group received a formal evaluation instrument as feedback information. The third group received a combination of a formal evaluation instrument and a computer-aided evaluation analysis report as feedback. The formal evaluation instrument was developed for this study by a survey of professional
technical writers and technical writing teachers. The computer aided evaluation analysis was developed from the General Motors STAR program with enhancements by integrating WordStar and SpellStar programs. The data were analyzed by a one-way analysis of variance technique and an F test to answer the research question which sought to ascertain if differing levels of evaluation feedback information would significantly affect achievement learning of technical report writing skills among groups. Additionally, a Scheffe method of comparison was applied to ascertain any significant differences between comparison groups.

Findings. The study revealed significant differences among the groups in achievement levels. The F-value of 3.82 was attained and when compared to an F-value table at two and fifty-seven degrees of freedom, significant differences were found to exist.

Conclusion. The following conclusion was drawn: Instructors may expect their students to achieve higher levels of achievement when they utilize a combination of a formal evaluation instrument and computer aided evaluation as a part of the instructional procedure rather than when they receive only traditional teacher evaluation.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF HOLISTIC AND OBJECTIVE MEASUREMENT OF TRANSCRIPTION AND COMPOSITION COMPONENTS IN WRITTEN LANGUAGE

BRYANT, BRIAN R., Ph.D. The University of Texas at Austin, 1984. 166 pp. Supervising Professor: J. Lee Wiederholt

This study examined the relationships between holistic and objective measurement techniques when selected aspects of written language were evaluated. Specifically, subelements (i.e., idea generation, vocabulary, grammar, capitalization/punctuation, spelling, and legibility), components (transcription and composition), and total-performance holistic measurement were utilized. During transcription and composition, and total-performance holistic measurement were selected for examination. One hundred eighty subject protocols, 30 each from grades 3 through 8, were selected from the standardization sample of the Test of Written Language (Hammill and Larsen, 1983) for use in this study. Subtest scores were available on each protocol and represented performance based on an objective measure. Trained evaluators examined the writing samples from the TOWL and their ratings an analytic scale designed by the author performance based on a holistic measure.

Correlational procedures were employed to determine the relationships which existed between performance scores on TOWL subtests and the corresponding holistic subelement ratings of evaluators. Results indicated that moderate relationships existed between the evaluation methods for all writing subelements. Correlational procedures were also used to examine the relationships which existed between composition scores when evaluated using objective and holistic measures, and transcription scores when evaluated using objective and holistic measures. Resulting coefficients suggested that a moderate relationship existed between evaluation methods when components of writing were measured.

Correlational procedures were again employed to examine the relationships which existed among objective test scores, analytic/holistic scores, and general impression/holistic scores when total writing performance was measured. Results indicated the existence of strong interrelationships among evaluation measures. Several analyses were conducted to determine if student classifications into one of four categories (high composition/high transcription, high composition/low transcription, low composition/high transcription, and low composition/low transcription) were affected by method of evaluation. Results indicated that agreement between placements based on evaluation measures was significantly greater than that which would be expected by chance. These findings illustrate the value of both objective and holistic measures in evaluating student writing performance. The implications for general, remedial, and special education lie chiefly in the empirical documentation of intercorrelations and verification of the relationships between objective and holistic measurement techniques.

THE COMPOSING PROCESSES OF BLIND WRITERS

Order No. DA8501487


An examination of the composing processes of blind writers was conducted to determine the strategies used by these composers. Two individuals blind from birth and two persons blinded later in life participated in the study.

Using participant observation and stimulated recall, the researcher examined the composing processes of these subjects. Each individual participated in four writing sessions and used the compose-aloud technique whereby the composer repeats orally any thoughts that occur during writing. In addition, an interview was conducted with each participant which provided a writing history, attitude toward writing, and composing strategies.

Results of the research indicated that blind writers use the same basic processes of writing as reported for sighted writers. Blind writers in this study did not make written plans prior to writing and spent between one and four minutes in prewriting. Planning was an ongoing feature of the composing process. The writers in this study demonstrated the recursive feature of composing. Rescanning was a continual part of their composing sessions. Three of the subjects reported using rescanning for planning and editing. One individual reported using rescanning for editing only.

Some differences were found in the blind writers as compared to the research on sighted composers. First, blind writers averaged 39 rescans per essay, while research on the sighted reported approximately six rescans in each session. The difference in the number of rescans between these two groups may be a result of the blind writer's need to locate position on the page or from a difference in short-term memory in the sighted and nonsighted.

Writers blind from birth demonstrated a difference in the ability to organize an essay in the extensive mode. These composers made no global plans. Rather they allowed the writing to unfold as they wrote. This research would indicate that sight may have a role in composing.

THE EFFECTS OF PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND AUDIENCE ON WRITING

Order No. DA8503407

CHESKY, JOHN ALAN, Ed.D. University of Kentucky, 1984. 136 pp. Director: Dr. Elfrieda Hiebert

This study examined the effects of low and high prior knowledge and peer and teacher audiences on students' writing. Eighty high school juniors wrote a letter to the editor. Half of the students wrote about a topic on which they had low prior knowledge ("tobacco price supports") and half wrote about a topic on which they had high prior knowledge ("the problem with teachers"). Half of the students in each prior knowledge group wrote to their peers and the other half wrote to their teacher.

Analyses of variance showed that the students in the high prior
knowledge wrote significantly higher than students in the low- 
knowledge group on the measures of holistic scoring, essay 
length, and content rating. Analyses of prior knowledge 
effects did not reveal statistically significant results, however, on the 
measures of cohesion, mean F.U. length, and errors. Also, analyses 
of audience effects and the interaction effect did not show significant 
mean differences on any of the writing measures. 

In addition, analyses of prior knowledge effects revealed 
statistically significant results on three of the responses on the self- 
report survey: "involvement," "liking," and "ease." Again analyses 
of audience effects and the interaction effect did not show significant 
differences on any of the involvement survey responses. 
The correlational analyses also demonstrated statistically 
significant relationships between the three prior knowledge 
measures (fluency, organization, and combination) and several of the writing 
and affect measures. 

In conclusion, students who wrote with a high level of prior 
knowledge wrote quantitatively more, qualitatively better, were more 
involved in their writing, liked their writing, and found the task of 
writing much easier than students who wrote with a low level of prior 
knowledge. Students who wrote for their peers as an ungraded activity 
did not, however, produce better written products than students who 
write for their teacher as a graded activity.

THE TEACHING OF CREATIVE WRITING IN SELECTED 
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, 1970-1980: ISSUES, 
ACTIVITIES, AND TRENDS  
Order No. DA8503639 
COTTON, HELEN DONALENE Smith, Ph.D. George Peabody College for 
Teachers of Vanderbilt University, 1984. 132pp. Major Professor: 
Robert Whitman 

This study examines the issues, activities, and trends in teaching 
Information was obtained by reviewing articles, surveying a sample of 
114 teachers, and examining forty-six course outlines. 

Chapter I presents the rationale and states the problem: to identify 
and record issues, activities, and trends in order to provide teachers 
and students with resources to supplement present information. 
Chapter II reviews articles on the teaching of creative writing. 
Chapter III presents an analysis of questionnaire responses. Chapter IV 
presents information from the course outlines. Chapter V examines 
the findings. 

Some of the findings are: that the teachers are usually qualified 
writers who think of themselves as specialists; that courses are 
available for most students, that most teachers use many and varied 
methods, no textbooks or few, that workshops, journals, and 
portfolios are popular, that publication is not necessarily a goal, but 
that the nurturing of the imagination and strengthening of writing 
abilities are goals.

A STUDY OF THE WORD PROCESSOR AND COMPOSING: 
CHANGES IN ATTITUDE AND REVISION PRACTICES OF 
INEXPERIENCED STUDENT WRITERS IN A COLLEGE 
COMPOSITION CLASS  
Order No. DA8423553 
Supervisor: Associate Professor John W. Conner 

This study explored the effects of the computer as a word 
processor upon the composing process of student writers enrolled in 
a Composition course at Kirkwood Community College. A case study 
methodology was selected so as to observe the use of this technology in 
an instructional setting to answer several questions: (1) Is there a 
change in student attitude in regard to writing? (2) Are there changes 
in the amount and types of revisions that occur because students are 
using the word processor? (3) How can the word processor best be 
used for the teaching of writing? 

Student attitude was observed through the use of student journals, 
writing profiles, attitude surveys, and direct observation. Students 
who used the word processor showed a definite improvement in their 
attitudes towards writing and became more confident writers because 
of the ease of editing.

Six essays were analyzed according to a matrix which tabulated 
the operations of addition, deletion, substitution, and reordering. 
These operations were divided into domains of punctuation, word, 
phrase, clause, sentence, and meaning chunks. Whereas most 
students revising handwritten copies tend to make surface level 
revisions, these students did not, and the word processor expanded 
their operations to revise more holistically, reordering as well as 
adding, substituting, and deleting.

The group of students who continued to use the word processor 
opportunities scored higher on UWEP1 than those who did not have 
similar experiences. 

Information on high school writing was obtained by interviewing 85 
randomly selected freshmen in the College of Letters and Science at 
UW-Madison. A questionnaire was developed asking students to 
describe writing experiences, including number of composition 
courses completed and the frequency of writing and use of revision 
and prewriting activities in English and non-English Department 
courses. Other independent variables analyzed were high school 
rank, number of academic units, number of units of English, and self-assessment of writing skills compared to high school and college 
peers. Data on socioeconomic status were collected to determine its 
effect on UWEP1 score.

A multiple regression analysis, using UWEP1 as the dependent 
variable, and Pearson correlations were used to measure the 
association between UWEP1 score and the variables describing high 
school writing. 

None of the variables used in the multiple regression predicted 
UWEP1 score. Significant correlations were found between UWEP1 
score and academic units, rank, composition courses completed, use 
of self-revision in composition courses, and self-assessment of writing 
skills compared to high school and college peers. Variables 
developed to measure frequency of writing and use of revision in 
literature and non English Department courses showed no significant 
correlation with UWEP1 score.

The findings confirm that instruction in composition is essential in 
developing good writing. Data suggest that UWEP1 does not 
delete important differences for students' high school writing 
experiences and does not measure comprehensively students' writing 
abilities. Student responses indicate that they are not writing 
frequently in high school and using good writing techniques such 
as revision or reworking activities.

Based on the findings, recommendations to develop a more 
comprehensive English placement test and to foster increased and 
better instruction in composition were presented.
attitude towards writing their additional experience allowed them to essays, revised more frequently, and exhibited a more positive mattershey had revised the required terse assignments wrote longer compose with the word processor without an interruptic'y in the focus for teachers of writing. The word procesior might best be used upon revising rather than upon recopying.

USING A LEARNING STYLES APPROACH TO TEACHING COMPOSITION

After examining the concept of learning styles and asserting their importance in the classroom. the dissertation explores ways information about individual styles can be used in teaching writing. It investigates the hypotheses that helping students identify and develop their individual styles and adopt new approaches will result in better writing and improved attitudes about writing. The hypothesis was tested using two remedial composition classes, one of which was taught from a learning styles perspective while the other served as a comparison class. The conduct of the learning styles class involved three steps: (1) identification of students' individual learning styles in terms of field dependence/independence, sensory-motor preference, and level-of-processing; (2) instruction designed to develop the preferred style, and (3) learning about and employing alternate strategies. The indicators used to measure outcomes were performance in writing impromptu essays, the amount of improvement in writing, and changes in attitude from beginning to end of semester. Outside readers evaluated the essays as to unity, coherence, adequate development, and accuracy. Attitude changes were measured by means of an objective Attitude Survey. Twenty-six students began each class. Results were mixed. Fourteen (of 17) comparison students wrote final essays judged competent while 12 (of 20) learning styles students did so. Improvement was shown by twelve comparison and eleven learning styles students. Changes in attitudes were all favorable in the learning styles class. Two changes in the comparison class were favorable, all others were unfavorable. Three factors may have influenced the outcome of the impromptu writing scores: (1) six low readers (10.0 or below) completed the learning styles class whereas none completed the comparison class; (2) the comparison instructor added a familiar topic to those intended for the final essay, and (3) the learning styles instructor did not emphasize the "three reasons" pattern of organization sufficiently.

A COMPARISON OF TWO APPROACHES TO USING WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Because of recent emphasis upon the process of writing, rather than the product of writing, educators see writing not only as a means of communicating knowledge, but also as a part of the acquisition of knowledge. What is not yet clear is whether writing about a discipline other than English should be an integral part of the English composition class, dual subject approach, or whether writing about a discipline should be conducted within the discipline, single subject approach (Kinney, 1963). Over a two-year period, writing samples, writing attitude surveys, and final grades in a history class were collected to determine which of the two approaches to writing and within a discipline are effective in improving quality of writing, changing attitude toward writing, and enhancing learning. One group had a dual subject program in which World Civilization content served as the reading content for the English class, and the students' writing assignments were about the World Civilization content. A second group had a single subject program in which the content and writing assignments in the English class were the same as in all of the English classes at the college. The World Civilization class was the same for both groups, the students wrote more within the discipline under the direction of a professor who had received training at two writing workshops. The English professor received the same training, Pre-writing and post-writing samples and pre-writing attitude and post-writing attitude surveys were taken from each group as well as final exam grades in the World Civilization course. The writing samples and attitude surveys were scored, and tests were used to determine differences between pre- and post-writing samples and pre- and post-attitude surveys. Pearson product-moment correlations were used to determine relationships between post-writing samples and post-attitude surveys and between post-writing samples and final World Civilization grades. There were no significant differences in the pre-writing and post-writing samples of both the dual subject group and the single subject group. There were significant differences in the pre-writing attitude and post-writing attitude surveys of the dual subject group, but there
were no significant differences in the pre-writing attitude and post-
writing attitude surveys of the single subject group. There was no
significant correlation between post-writing samples and post-writing
attitude surveys for both groups, and there was no significant
correlation between post-writing samples and final exam grades in
World Civilization for both groups.

THE EFFECTS OF IMPLEMENTING 'PROCESS WRITING INTO
A SEVENTH GRADE ENGLISH CURRICULUM


The study examined the effects of a nine-week process writing unit
upon seventh grade students in two English classes. It also observed
changes in the curriculum of the school's other seventh-grade English
classes.

Subjects (N = 139) were 12 and 13-year-old students in a junior
high school's six English classes. Two classes (N = 42) became the
study's treatment group exposed to a nine-week process writing unit.
The other four English classes (N = 97) were observed for changes in
the usual classroom procedures as a result of English faculty share
sessions.

The Language Expression and Language Mechanics subscales of the
California Achievement Tests were administered as pretests and
posttests to measure changes in the treatment group's language
ability. Pretest and posttest writing samples from all subjects
indicated changes in the writing ability of both groups. A follow-up
questionnaire and an interaction analysis provided data on the effects
of the faculty share sessions.

The findings led to the conclusion that a process writing unit in
nine weeks did not improve language ability skills of the treatment
group but did allow the students to maintain these skills. Seventh
grade students may need more practice of skills, also, to improve their
writing ability when writing is holistically rated. The range of writing
ability as measured by the study's analytic scale may have been
insufficient. Time constraints may have affected the rating procedure.
Finally, with encouragement, teachers in the study may introduce the
process approach into the school's English curriculum. Also, students
in the treatment group perceived writing to be enjoyable.

Three curriculum recommendations came from the findings. The
school's principal might encourage the English teachers to continue
the share sessions, to become change agents, and to be trained in
holistic scoring.

Several recommendations for further research were made. This
study should be replicated, using a longer time period. Rating training
and rating procedures using time as a variable should be investigated.
Comparisons between university and secondary writing instructors as
raters should be made. Procedures should be investigated by which
secondary English teachers can become more effective change
agents.

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF SENTENCE COMBINING AS
A MEANS OF IMPROVING SYNTACTIC MATURITY, WRITING
QUALITY AND GRAMMATICAL FLUENCY IN THE
COMPOSITIONS OF REMEDIAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

135pp. Sponsor: Professor Lucy McCormick Calkins

This experiment tested three related hypotheses: whether
remedial eleventh grade students trained in sentence combining
would show more growth in syntactic maturity, greater improvement
in writing quality, and greater reduction in incidence of basic errors
than similar students in traditional classes. Ninety remedial students
were randomly assigned to one of four classes, two of which
were randomly assigned to one of four classes. Two of which
remedial group) received twenty-six lessons in sentence
comparing in one semester, while the other two (control group) had
none. Each of two teachers taught an experimental and control class.

Data on six factors of syntactic maturity and three factors of
grammatical fluency (run ons, fragments, verb inflection errors) were
collected and analyzed for significance at the .05 level from narrative
compositions students wrote as pre and post tests. To compare
writing quality of the two groups, a system of forced choices between
matched pairs of post test compositions was used.

Results showed that, when compared to the control group,
sentence combining experienced significant growth on two of six
factors of syntactic maturity and approached significant growth on
two others. One teacher was more successful than the other with her
sentence combining group. The comparison of writing quality favored
neither group. One teacher, however, was more successful with the
control group, the other with the experimental group. The study thus
suggests that teacher personality, rather than a particular pedagogy,
may account for some effectiveness in teaching writing skills. In
assessing grammatical fluency, differences between groups were
insignificant in number of run-ons and verb errors. The experimental
group wrote significantly fewer fragments, but incidence of error here
was minute to begin with.

One explanation of the results is that eleventh grade basic writers
are part of a syndrome of failure. Sentence combining instruction may
be somewhat successful in altering their syntactic behavior. However,
in this study, when compared to conventional methods, it was not
superior in improving writing quality. Both methods were ineffective
in teaching error reduction. One speculated whether twenty-six lessons
in one semester is enough with any method for such writers to gain
control over sentences, reduce error, and improve writing quality.

WRITING IN A SCIENCE CLASS: A CASE STUDY OF THE
CONNECTIONS BETWEEN WRITING AND LEARNING


Chairperson: Professor Gordon Pradl

In the field of written composition there is general agreement that
the act of writing is a powerful means of learning for the writer.
Recently there has been interest in increasing the use of writing in
school subjects across the curriculum. Current research in this area
emphasizes the need for increased writing both as an aid to students'
understanding of a subject and to their development as writers.

This study explored the connections between student writing and
learning in a seventh grade biology class. The teacher, a 20-year
experiented biology teacher, wanted to introduce new writing
assignments in her class and to treat this writing in ways more congruent
with her growing understanding of her own writing processes.

The findings show that the teacher assigned writing almost every
day, both for completion in class and for homework. But only rarely
could the students use these writing assignments to make personal
connections with new subject matter, to reconstruct it using their own
language, or to raise speculative questions about the material.

Possible reasons for this finding include the teacher's conflicting
goals for her students' learning of science, her uncertain
understanding of the role written language played in this learning,
her inconsistent instruction for and follow-up to the writing
assignments she made. This latter inconsistency was found during all
of the stages of the writing assignment cycle, described in this study as
all the events associated with a writing assignment, from the teacher's
introduction and its reception by the students, to the teacher's follow-
up to the students' work via oral or written comments, and her further
instructions.

This study revealed a basic disjunction between the teacher's
desire to introduce new writing assignments to aid her students' learning
and her practical knowledge of how to introduce and follow-
up writing assignments consistently with her students.

The results of the study also yielded implications for the use of
writing in science classes, in preservice and in-service courses for
science teachers, and in possible directions for future research into
the connections between writing and learning in subject area
classrooms.
AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF INDEPENDENT WRITING TIME AND EXPOSURE TO A WRITING ROLE MODEL ON SELECTED KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

Order No. DA8423485
JULIA GOSSEY, Ph.D., The University of Alabama, 1984
178pp.

This study was conducted to determine if there was any significance difference in the gain scores related to (a) concepts about print, (b) writing vocabulary, and (c) pre-reading performance among three groups of selected kindergarten children: an experimental group receiving opportunities for independent writing and exposure to a writing role model in the school environment, an experimental group receiving opportunities for independent writing without a writing role model, and a control group receiving no specific instruction. Subjects were placed randomly into one of three research groups to assure 24 subjects in each group. Experimental Group 1 was provided with independent writing time and exposure to a writing role model. Experimental Group 2 was provided with independent writing time, but without the writing role model. The Control Group was provided with writing skill sheets. The treatment was provided for 20 minutes, 3 days a week for the 5-week duration of the study.

The data revealed a significant difference between the experimental groups and the control group with respect to gains in concepts about print. There was a significant difference between Experimental Group 1 and the other two groups with respect to gains in writing vocabulary. No significant differences were found between the three groups with respect to gains in pre-reading skills.

The findings of this study suggested that independent writing time had positive effects on children's acquisition of concepts about printed language. It also suggested that independent writing time with exposure to a writing role model in the school environment had positive effects on children's writing vocabulary performance. However, independent writing time, with or without a writing role model, did not significantly affect pre-reading, as determined by the Metropolitan Reading Tests.

Implications are that children come to school with a wealth of knowledge about print that could be applied to formal instruction in reading and writing. More research is needed to clarify the role of independent writing time in the school curriculum. Also, the effects of a writing role model at different grade levels need to be determined.

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PERSUASIVE WRITING: ROLE OF WRITERS' VERBAL ABILITY AND WRITING ANXIETY WHEN WORKING UNDER TIME CONSTRAINTS

Order No. DA8427549
KAGAN, DONALD KENT, Ph.D., University of Georgia, 1984
84pp.

The persuasive writing skills of undergraduate students were examined. The students were asked to produce persuasive letters to convince a school board to accept either a pro or con stand on corporal punishment in the classroom. In Experiment 1, the students were limited in the amount of time they had to produce the letters. In Experiment 2, the students had an unlimited amount of time to produce their letters. In both experiments, the students' Scholastic Aptitude Test verbal ability scores were positively correlated with holistic ratings of quality, and negatively correlated with their writing anxiety and mechanics errors. Taken together, the findings indicated that verbal ability facilitates persuasive writing performance, while writing anxiety inhibits it. The findings also provided some support for the notion that verbal ability largely determines writing anxiety.

Finally, the findings suggested that the availability of additional writing time does not necessarily lead to fewer mechanics errors or greater production of original arguments.

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LITERATURE AS EQUIPMENT FOR WRITING: APPLICATIONS OF KENNETH BURKE'S DRAMATISM TO THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

Order No. DA8422649
JACOB MARTIN JAMES, Ph.D., University of Oregon, 1984
168pp.

Adviser: John T. Gage

Effective writing exhibits the intention of the author fitted to the needs, desires, interests, knowledge, experience—what Kenneth Burke calls the orientation—of the reader. To achieve this fit, authors must consider topics from the perspectives of their audiences. Students who can do this are termed "relativists" by William G. Perry, and their cognitive acts demonstrate what Jean Piaget terms "formal operational thinking."

Burke, Perry, and Piaget believe that as human beings mature physically, intellectually, and ethically, they become able to develop the skills required for rhetoric. Research on cognitive development shows that while college freshmen are capable of such skills, very few have developed them. Thus, instructors of freshmen composition teach an art requiring formal operational thinking and relativism to concrete dualists.

This study explores the usefulness of Burke's dramatism for improving rhetorical fluency, and offers some applications of his theory to a methodology and a method for teaching writing. The first two chapters describe this development and effects of orientations and ends by discussing how the technological psychosis Burke's term for the socioeconomic forces that has shaped the modern age—has led to instruction in composition that neglects cognitive development.

The last part of this study shows how Burke's dramatism can improve instruction in composition. His philosophy assumes the relativity of all orientations, considers the ramifications of this relativity, and offers a system for bridging orientations and thereby communicating. Applied to composition, dramatism would use literary works that that expose students to alternative, powerful perspectives, in order to introduce the disquiet, which induces cognitive development. By means of dramatistic analysis, students gain experience in analyzing and understanding other perspectives so that they become able to write, to respond to the orientations, of their audiences and thereby to discover and expand shared beliefs.

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APPARENT REGRESSION IN STUDENT WRITING PERFORMANCE AS A FUNCTION OF UNRECOGNIZED CHANGES IN TASK COMPLEXITY

Order No. DA8427007
KRECH, CATHERINE LUCAS, Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley, 1984
396pp.

The study addresses the problem of unexpected drops in scores on sequences of essay tests, identifying some cases of apparent regression in performance level as a function of unacknowledged changes in the writing task as some students attempt more in writing, they lose control of rhetorical niceties traditionally rewarded by readers, or they mix methods of textual construction proper to different kinds of tests, which they have not yet fully differentiated, causing performance scores to drop. A new method of classifying discourse types is presented which allows more precise linguistic and rhetorical.
Enhancement of Middle School Students' Written Production Through the Use of Word Processing

Order No. DA8427887
KOPING, JEFFERY L. Ph D. Kansas State University, 1984. 100pp

This study examined the possibility that use of a word processor would significantly enhance the quality of students' written production. From a volunteer sample of middle-school students, forty subjects were randomly selected and assigned to treatment or control groups. Treatment subjects were exposed to the use of a word processor and produced a creative writing sample after training. Control subjects produced a freehand creative writing sample which was transformed in the word processor exactly as hand written. The students' writings were scored blind by an independent professional writing corporation, providing two separate scores, one for mechanics, another for usage. In addition, subjects were timed for completion and revision and completed semantic differential attitude surveys on the constructs 'word writing', 'word processing', and 'computers'.

Four two-dimensional multivariate analyses of variance were utilized to examine differences among and across the four groups on the seven dependent measures. Univariate analyses of variance were used in the presence of significant multivariate effects and the Tukey Honestly Significant Difference technique was used to explore significant interactions.

Significantly more positive attitudes toward the constructs 'word writing' and 'computers' were reported by control group subjects. While no differences were found on time for completion, treatment subjects spent significantly more time in the revision of their work. Treatment subjects were rated as having performed significantly better than control subjects on both mechanics and usage. No significant effects for the power versus time constrained conditions were found comparing the groups using attitude and performance scores simultaneously provided exactly the same conclusions as had the primary analyses.

The largely unexpected results of the attitude ratings were explained as an anomaly of the timing of administration of the scales that treatment subjects did not spend significantly more time in preparation contrary to initial expectations, but apparently when using microcomputer word processing do spend more time planning their work and do not 'think' before producing products in time for a second checking and revising.

Teaching English Composition to Developmental Students at the College Level: A Free Writing-Language Study Approach Versus a Structured Writing-Language Study Approach

Order No. DA8428129
LEVIS, RUSBY M. Ph D. Kansas State University, 1984. 135pp

The purpose of this study was to determine if a free writing/language study approach was more effective in teaching developmental students English composition as compared to a traditional structured writing/language study approach. Two intact experimental groups were used in this study: Group 1 serving as a treatment group and Group 2 as a comparison group. Group 1 (22 subjects) was exposed to the free writing/language study approach; Group 2 (30 subjects) was exposed to the structured writing/language study approach. The population was comprised of first-year and second-year students enrolled in the Developmental English Program at Grambling State University during the 1983 fall semester.

Writing samples were used as a measure of student writing performance. Ten compositions, inclusive of a pretest and posttest, were evaluated to determine the effects of the free writing and structured writing treatments. A holistic method of evaluation was employed in the scoring of individual compositions. Each composition was assigned a total quality using 1 (lowest quality) through 6 (highest quality).
LEARNING, TEACHING, AND WRITING: A WORKSHOP
USING TRANSPARENCIES


Part One: "Learning, Teaching, and Writing," concerns the relationship between learning theory and approaches to teaching writing. This discourse examines theory of learning and writing, explores traditional techniques and recent alternatives, and proposes a new technique, based on the principle of active learning, for teaching writing to large classes. Educators suggest that because writing is a process requiring initiative, contradiction, and experiment, the teacher serves best as a "facilitator," not an authority figure, while maintaining an atmosphere of inquiry and interaction. Also, researchers in writing describe writing as an active process of communication and imply that composition is best learned through active engagement in the process through discovery, dialogue, and experiment in the classroom. Traditional "receptive" methods of instruction and recent "active" alternatives, despite their strengths, often prove ineffective in large writing classes.

Part Two: "Faulkner's Sanctuaries," concerns Faulkner's ironic use of sanctuaries in seven novels. Most of Faulkner's characters seek and find sanctuary, but few find unambiguous havens. The use of sanctuaries in seven novels. Most of Faulkner's characters seek and find sanctuary, but few find unambiguous havens. The irony of his treatment is demonstrated to be both theoretically sound and practically useful. "Receptive" methods of instruction and recent "active" alternatives, learned through active engagement in the process through discovery, dialogue, and experiment in the classroom.

The hypothesis tested was that of no significant difference in the writing performance of developmental students taught English composition using a free writing/language study approach compared to developmental students taught using a traditional English composition using a free writing/language study approach. Based upon the results of the data collected in this study, the null hypothesis was retained at the 0.05 significance level. The free writing/language study approach and the structured writing/language study approach to teaching English composition appeared to be statistically equal in their effects on the writing performance of developmental students, with respect to the time element considered in administering the two treatments.

Findings. Findings of the study include the following three categories: (1) Pretest Essays: Marshall Writing Workshop students produced significantly longer posttest essays than those made by comparable students in a traditional writing program and to determine whether or not the Marshall Writing Workshop was of comparable benefit to three different gradeability groups--junior, regular, and senior. (2) Marshall Writing Workshop program in grades seven, eight, and ten--produced significantly longer posttest essays than those made by comparable students in a traditional writing program and to determine whether or not the Marshall Writing Workshop was of comparable benefit to three different gradeability groups--junior, regular, and senior. (3) The mechanics of writing (usage, punctuation, spelling, handwriting) did not appear to be significantly affected by either instructional treatment.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MARSHALL WRITING WORKSHOP APPROACH IN TEACHING WRITING


Purposes of the Study. The purposes of the study were to determine whether or not gains made by Marshall Writing Workshop students were greater over a one-year period than those made by comparable students in a traditional writing program and to determine whether or not the Marshall Writing Workshop was of comparable benefit to three different grade ability groups--junior, regular, and senior.

Procedure. Sub-setting a random sample of students in grades seven through ten--enrolled in two East Texas school districts in 1982-83--students were matched for sex, race, and English grade point average. Beginning-of-year writing samples and end-of-year writing samples were scored by the Diederich Analytic Scale. Using the t test for correlated groups, two-tailed, with significance at the 0.05 level, a comparison of pretest scores, posttest scores, and gain scores was made.

Findings. Findings of the study include the following three categories: (1) Pretest Essays: Marshall Writing Workshop students produced significantly longer posttest essays compared to traditional treatment.
The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the writing curriculum of one class of entering middle-school students during one school year. Components studied were the selection and curriculum of one class of entering middle-school students during the school year. The main questions guided the study: (1) What writing curriculum does the middle school teacher develop and implement with her students? (2) How does the teacher implement the writing curriculum? (3) What are the responsibilities of the students for enacting the writing curriculum? and (4) What relationship does writing have to other elements of the school curriculum?

Ethnographic methods involved ongoing processes of data collection, and concurrent analysis of data to validate findings by noting repeated observations of similar events, and by triangulation, or by comparing results with other types of evidence. Data sources included field notes, teacher journal entries, interviews, videotapes, writing samples and other school artifacts. Writing activities of a sixth-grade teacher of communication arts and social studies and her students were identified, described and related to one another. The meaning of these activities as related to the viewpoints of participants, or outsiders, particularly that of the teacher. Findings were interpreted from the viewpoint of outcomes, that is, form perspectives represented by theories of curriculum, namely, Ralph Tyler, John Dewey, and Paulo Freire.

Findings include the following. The description and explanation of curricular activities illustrate that the teacher selected and implemented an approach that reflected awareness of increasing complexity in view of student needs and interests. She prefigured prerequisite skill lessons with longer, more complex and creative writing projects to meet her goals that each student experience success, expend his or her best efforts, improve writing skills, and clarify thinking. She shared with her students roles of evaluating, providing individual assistance, modeling writing processes and products, dec. writing, and editing writing and reading the writings of other students. She also transformed district and school imposed constraints into opportunities for meeting her curricular goals.

CRITERIA AND CONSISTENCY OF FRESHMAN COMPOSITION EVALUATION: A NATIONAL STUDY
Order No. DAB423882
MOORE, WAYNE JOHN, JR., Ph.D. North Texas State University, 1984. 130pp.
Adviser: Robert Sylwester

The problem this study was concerned with was that of determining the criteria and consistency of college freshman composition in the United States. The purposes were to describe and rank the evaluator factors and criteria reported. The study involved the development of criteria and consistency of college freshman composition in the United States. The purposes were to describe and rank the evaluator and criteria reported. The study involved the development of criteria and consistency of college freshman composition in the United States, and to identify relationships between scores assigned freshman writing and various characteristics of evaluators, including evaluator's type of school. A random sample of 600 members of the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English received questionnaires and writing samples to evaluate. Three hundred eighty-six responses were included in the testing of the sixteen hypotheses.

The study indicated that there are no significant differences in the mean scores of writing samples scored by evaluators in community colleges, colleges, and universities, that there is more agreement than
disagreement among teachers with regard to criteria, that evaluators assign scores based on their stated criteria, that using factor such as age, gender, school size, terms of composition/ rhetoric education, related degrees held, years of teaching experience, and method of evaluation are of little use as predictors of scores assigned to writing samples by freshman composition teachers, that few evaluators use scales for the evaluation of writing, that most teachers use the holistic method for evaluation and that ideas expressed and organization are the most important criteria for evaluators, that teachers assign lower scores to writing samples weak in organization and ideas expressed than to samples weak in mechanics and usage, that teachers most clearly recognize weaknesses in organization when they evaluate writing, and that writing samples should be a major part of any assessment of writing.

The effects of computer-assisted writing on the composing processes of basic writers:


More and more basic (developmental/remedial) writers are using word processing programs to compose university-level writing assignments. No research existed which examined changes in composing processes of basic writers who begin using a word processing program for composing. If changes occur, basic writing instructors, designers of word processing systems, and basic writers should be made aware of them. Consequently, this study examined five basic writers who, first, used pen and paper to complete an “in-class” writing assignment. Then they learned to use “BANK STREET WRITER,” a word processing program designed for writers at about the middle school level. Then they used the word processing system to complete an assignment similar to the first. During both sessions, their writing and verbalizations about their writing processes were video and audio taped. The writers were interviewed before and after the sessions. Comparisons of the computer-assisted sessions to the conventional sessions revealed the following: Reductions in the number of second physical drafts, shorter sessions, increased edits, production of shorter text strings, increased readings of the topic, decreasemental verbalizations of assessments of texts, greater production of words, system-caused interventions in composing. Each of these results is discussed, with a major conclusion being that computer-assisted writing did not generally affect the goals and plans of these writers.

An investigation of the effects of sentence combining and story expansion delivered by word processing microcomputers on the writing ability of sixth graders:

PEER, KAREN LEE, ED.D. TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY, 1984. 75 PAGES. CHAIRPERSON: DR. MICHAEL ANGELOTTI

Purpose: This study was designed to investigate the effects of sentence combining and story expansion delivered by word processing microcomputers on the written syntactic maturity of sixth graders in an effort to identify a feasible method of computer delivered writing instruction.

Methods: A repeated measures ANOVA design was used to test the hypotheses: (1) microcomputer delivery of sentence combining and story expansion would significantly increase the embeddings per T-unit of students in the experimental group as compared to students in the control group; and (2) microcomputer delivery of sentence combining and story expansion would significantly increase the mean T-unit length of students in the experimental group as compared to students in the control group.

The 146 students were assigned to the following treatments: (a) combined effects of sentence combining, story expansion, and microcomputer delivery (Group A); (b) sentence combining and microcomputer delivery (Group B); and (c) traditional delivery of sentence combining lessons (Group C).

The researchers trained group A in word processing and sentence combining techniques. Each of three intact sixth grade language arts classes (N = 86) at Bowman Middle School in Plano, Texas represented one of the following treatments: (a) combined effects of sentence combining, story expansion, and microcomputer delivery (Group A); (b) sentence combining and microcomputer delivery (Group B); and (c) traditional delivery of sentence combining lessons (Group C). The researchers trained the students in word processing and sentence combining. Each teacher introduced one 50-minute sentence combining lesson a week during the six-week study. Groups used identical sentence combining lessons designed by the researcher.

The pre- and posttests of narrative writing ability stimulated by scripts designed by the researcher were administered one week prior to and following treatment. Tests were analyzed for number of embeddings per T-unit and mean T-unit length. Analysis of covariance was used to determine statistical significance and the influence of treatment on writing maturity.

Findings: Based on analysis of covariance, the researcher failed to reject the first hypothesis. There was a statistically significant difference among groups’ embeddings per T-unit measures. With scores for Group A increasing more than scores for either Groups B or C. The researcher failed to accept the second hypotheses, which was based on mean T-unit length.

Further research is needed to investigate variables which might increase the effectiveness and feasibility of this technique.

The effects of sentence combining on the writing of basic writers in the community college:

POWELL, JOYCE ELAINE, ED.D. EAST TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY, 1984. 225 PAGES. ADVISOR: JOYCE E. MILLER

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of sentence combining on syntactic fluency, judged quality, and frequency of punctuation and usage errors in the writing of community college basic writing students. The specific purpose was to determine the effects of the sentence-combining curriculum of The English I modules on the writing of basic writers.

Procedures: The population for this experiment was basic writing students enrolled in Developmental Writing 090 in the fall semester of 1983 on the Cedar Valley campus of the Dallas County Community College. The sample was divided into an experimental and control group; two instructors each taught an experimental and a control class. The treatment consisted of fifteen forty-five minute sessions of sentence combining from The English I modules. The control group studied grammar. The data were drawn from pretest and posttest essays and Syntactic Maturity Test (SMT) “Aluminum,” written by sixty-one subjects at the beginning and end of the sixteen-week experiment. The essays were typed and coded, and copies were holistically scored by six English teachers. Copies of the same essays were marked for four errors. The investigator marked and tabulated the SMT for T-unit length, clause length, and clauses per T-unit.

Findings: Analysis of covariance, with pretests as covariates, was used to compare the groups on syntactic fluency, judged quality, and errors in punctuation and usage. With the same measures, Student’s t-test was used to analyze the difference between pretest and posttest means for both groups. The 0.05 level was set to determine significance.

When the two groups were compared, the experimental group was significantly different from the control group on T-unit length measure of syntactic fluency and on
The control group was significant on judged quality. The experimental group reported pretest-posttest significance on all three measures of syntactic fluency and on two errors: fused or comma-spliced and subject-verb agreement.

Conclusion. The increase in syntactic fluency in the experimental group suggests that the sentence-combining curriculum of The English Modules had a positive effect on the writing of students in the experimental group. Although there may have been other factors affecting the quality of writing scores, sentence combining appeared to reduce certain errors.

Audience Awareness and Adaptation in the Persuasive Writing of Proficient and Nonproficient College Freshmen

This study identified important differences between proficient and nonproficient college freshman writers in their handling of a specific audience (reader). It investigated the common assumption that good writers, unlike poor writers, are more aware of their audience and that they are able to adapt their essays for a particular audience. Previous theory and research in composition has drawn many links between the quality of persuasive rhetoric and the writer's attention to the needs, interests, and backgrounds of an intended audience. Previous research has also related audience to the writer's capacity for forming multiple perspectives. In general, thorough research has been lacking in (1) its attempt to establish specific, situation-based criteria of audience adaptation, and (2) its attempt to connect the mediating influences of a writer's awareness of audience with specific features of written text. This study examined the content of persuasive essays written for a specific audience. Essays were analyzed for adaptations requiring writers' high and low level inferences. Writers were measured for their levels of awareness of specific pieces of information about the audience, as well as for their levels of perspective-taking ability (social cognition) and their attitudes toward the writing topic. These characteristics of the writers were then related to audience adaptations in their essays.

Findings indicate that when minimal information was given about the audience, proficient and nonproficient writers showed equal levels of adaptation. When more information was given, proficient writers took greater advantage of it than nonproficient writers, producing significantly more adaptations, especially those requiring low level inferences; there were no differences between groups in the number of high inference adaptations. Audience awareness was found to be a significant predictor of the number of high inference adaptations that writers made. The outcomes of this study support aspects of the supposed relationship between writing ability and audience adaptation. Findings about the relationship between the final written products and such mediating influences as audience awareness and perspective-taking ability are interpreted in light of current theory.
writing skills faster when exposed to dictation exercises related to those skills.

A pre-test and a post test were administered to three groups of developmental writing students at Nicholls State University. All three groups were taught writing skills using the controlled composition method which emphasizes imitation and proofreading skills as well as the developmental writing student's facility with the oral language. One treatment group received teacher-rated, student-copied dictation exercises during the 10-day period of the experiment. The second treatment group had dictation delivered by a videotape player and television monitor utilizing a professional dictation voice with the words of the dictation on the video screen. The third group, a control group, received no dictation exercises. The writing skill presentation in the classes was the correct use of present progressive, past, present, past and future tenses. The MBTI scores indicated the subjects' tendencies toward extraversion or introversion and sensing or intuition. It was expected that the extraversion and sensing groups would benefit the most from dictation exercises.

Analysis of the data was developed through an analysis of covariance program that used the pre-test as a covariate in order to refine the significance of the variance of the post-test scores. An additional analysis of covariance was applied to the data using the MBTI scores to develop a factorial design.

Results of the analysis of covariance indicated that there was no statistically significant difference among the three groups or among the various MBTI factorial interactions among the groups. An analysis of variance of the mean gains did show a statistically significant difference for the video dictation group compared to the control group. The use of dictation exercises, especially video dictation, is marginally supported by this study.

ACQUIRING PRACTICAL REASONING THROUGH TEACHER-STUDENT INTERACTION IN DIALOGUE JOURNALS

Order No. DA8428577

Staton, Jane Jo, Ph.D. University of California, Los Angeles, 1984. 556pp. Chair: Professor Frederick S. Elliott, Jr.

This study addresses the problem of how a teacher can help students acquire those concepts, beliefs, strategies and knowledge of themselves, other persons and the world on which rational deliberation and choices about action are based. Such practical reasoning is the heuristic, non-syllogistic rationality which characterizes human action. The thesis of this study is that practical reasoning is gradually acquired through extended interpersonal interactions with adults at the child learns to observe and practice the relevant concepts and strategies for understanding and acting on the world.

The data for the analysis consist of the complete texts of 26 dialogue journals from a sixth grade class written during the 1979-1980 school year. Dialogue journals are private written conversations which occur daily in the class between each student and their teacher. The dialogue journal texts provide a unique record of the daily, spontaneous thinking of children about the important events of their lives. Methods from discourse analysis and pragmatics were adopted and applied to the texts in order to describe the dialogic structure of these interactions. The dialogue journals are first described in their social context, as communicative events meeting a wide variety of student and teacher needs in the classroom. Then cross-sectional studies of specific features of the interactions across all journals, and longitudinal studies of individual teacher-student dialogues across the school year, are presented.

The cross-sectional studies of elaboration and attributional reasoning demonstrate how the teacher's strategies for discussing everyday experiences differ systematically from those of her students. The dialogue journals allow her to demonstrate informally more explicit, accurate descriptions of shared events, and to provide the students with a more useful, rational model of causal attributions.

The two longitudinal studies follow one major topic in a student's journal across the nine-month school year. These dialogues contain, instances of extended "interactional scaffolding" in which the teacher assists the student to re-examine problems from a different perspective, consider alternative actions, and incorporate new information and concepts helpful in that particular context. The dialogue journal texts provide an empirical picture of the actual acquisition of more socially mature and effective reasoning capacities.

A TRANSITION FROM SPEAKING TO WRITING: SMALL-GROUP WRITING CONFERENCES

Order No. DA8427531


Theories of group behavior from speech communication and theories of discourse from linguistics, when intersected for the purpose of analyzing small-group writing conferences, provide a framework for studying the transition from speaking to writing. Descriptive research, combining analytical methods from both disciplines, provides insights into communication patterns, changes in communication patterns, motivations for the changes, and finally, into the relationship between the group process and the writing process.

This descriptive case study analyzes the interaction of one freshman composition teacher and four students who met for a series of six conferences which were part of a freshman composition course at the University of Minnesota. The conferences, taped and transcribed, provide evidence for the benefits of the conference method of teaching composition. This study describes the group process, suggests parallels between the group process and the writing process, and provides an audience acquisition model that illustrates important components of students' writing development. Discussion that is focused on writing helps freshmen make the transition from speakers who are conversationally oriented to writers who are aware of how other minds perceive the world and who can adapt their writing to the needs of an imagined audience.

SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONSTRAINTS IN TESL WRITING OVER TIME

Order No. DA8427737

Vargus, Nanci Remmey, Ed.D. Indiana University. 393, 457pp. Chairperson: Dr. Carolyn L. Burke

A class of first graders exchanged weekly individual letters with the researcher and recorded their thoughts daily in journals. Although growth and development was manifested through these meaningful social experiences with written language, primary research interest was the evolution of register. Children's initial use of the pragmatic, semantic, syntactic and graphophonemic language cues system within and across the strategies of negotiability, textual intent, risk-taking and fine tuning language with language was empirically documented.

The changes which occurred over time were viewed as an orchestrated response to the transactive nature of socio-cognitive constraints. As a personal relationship developed with the researcher, and as paramount constraints evolved from controlling, perfecting and imitating to creating, trusting and communicating, children explored language in qualitatively and qualitatively different ways. Some statistically significant changes (p < .01) include: (1) a change...
from relying on topics previously introduced to generating new semantic bases for their messages; (2) an increase in the number of words, functional spelling, syntactic variation, t-units, sentences, amount of expansion, and diversity of topics. Other facets of their process as exemplified in their products were consistent: (1) Function was maintained; (2) The percentage of functional spelling was not significantly different; (3) Alternative communication systems were incorporated in the products and their use increased the depth and breadth of their messages.

Major strengths of this study are its ability to validate empirically (1) the powerful effect of one elementary school’s expectations for correctness of children’s willingness to explore written language and (2) the potential of young children to engage in and grow through meaningful language experience.
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