

University of Northern Iowa
UNI ScholarWorks

Graduate Research Papers

Student Work

2000

Reading/writing connection

Sandra J. Carpenter
University of Northern Iowa

Copyright ©2000 Sandra J. Carpenter

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Early Childhood Education Commons](#), and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Recommended Citation

Carpenter, Sandra J., "Reading/writing connection" (2000). *Graduate Research Papers*. 455.
<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/455>

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.

Reading/writing connection

Abstract

Reading and writing have many common tasks. Children's language abilities are nurtured through instructional practices that connect these commonalities. In a second-grade language arts program, tasks presented through reading instruction were related to children's writing experiences. To support the reading-writing connection, a strong literature base was created. This base offered models of language and focuses for discussions to relate the commonalities of the processes. The teacher traced the transfer of reading instruction to the children's writing through a collection of their writing pieces.

Reading/Writing Connection

A Graduate Journal Article

Submitted to the

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Sandra J. Carpenter

February 2000

This Graduate Journal Article by: Sandra J. Carpenter

Entitled: Reading/Writing Connection

has been approved as meeting the research article requirement for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

3/27/2000
Date Approved

Jeanne McLain Harms
Jeanne McLain Harms
Director of Research Project

3/27/2000
Date Approved

Jeanne McLain Harms
Jeanne McLain Harms
Graduate Faculty Adviser

3/27/00
Date Approved

Rick Traw
Rick Traw
Graduate Faculty Reader

3/27/00
Date Approved

Rick Traw
Rick Traw
Head, Department of Curriculum
and Instruction

Abstract

Reading and writing have many common tasks. Children's language abilities are nurtured through instructional practices that connect these commonalities.

In a second-grade language arts program, tasks presented through reading instruction were related to children's writing experiences. To support the reading-writing connection, a strong literature base was created. This base offered models of language and focuses for discussions to relate the commonalities of the processes. The teacher traced the transfer of reading instruction to the children's writing through a collection of their writing pieces.

In an effort to create meaning out of chaos and communicate with others, humans learn to listen, speak, read and write. These processes are interrelated (Camborne, 1988).

Humans are predisposed to learn language. Environment plays a significant supporting role (Butler & Turbill, 1984). In acquiring written language abilities, children experiment with print discovering the nature of language (Dyson, 1984).

Children's well being and academic learning depends on the ability to use language, for language allows them to interact socially. As children experience language in their environment, they create meaning and achieve their goals, thus extending their language abilities (Bromley, 1988).

Connections of the Written Language Processes

The processes of written language – reading and writing – connect frequently as they are engaged in. Reading is a receptive process. Readers focus on bringing meaning to written symbols (Smith, 1994). As they engage in the reading process, readers bring their prior knowledge of content and language to the text. The degree of prior knowledge will influence readers' ability to predict the meaning of a passage. Readers with a great deal of prior knowledge will be able to more easily interpret the meaning of a text (Butler & Turbill, 1984).

Writing is an expressive process. Writers relay meaning through the writing process. In creating meaning through written symbols, they use

their knowledges of the world, the organization of text, and elements, or signals of form (Graves, 1994).

As people read and write, they frequently engage in the same tasks, for example, sequence of ideas. As readers, they must follow the pattern of the author's ideas. Writers need to create a logical flow of ideas for readers to interpret (Bromley, 1988).

Overlaps in Written Language Tasks

If instruction is given in one aspect of language, whether it is listening, speaking, reading, or writing, it frequently can be observed being used in another aspect. In the case of reading, the tasks of main idea and supporting details may be taught. Then, as writing is engaged in, writers may be observed listing the main points of their compositions and supporting them with significant details. When the meaning signals of punctuation for writing are taught, readers can use them to predict more precisely the meaning of texts (Bromley, 1988).

As common tasks to reading and writing are presented in either aspect, they can be related to the other. For example, if a task common to both processes is presented in a reading lesson, it can be related to writing at the moment or referred to at a later date. By capitalizing on these overlaps, instruction can be more efficient. Discussions of what is involved in each task and how it is related to the reading and writing

processes will extend children's understanding of language, or metalanguage (Butler & Turbill, 1984).

Overlaps in the Recursive Nature of Written Language

The language processes are recursive. Those engaged in the processes move back and forth among the components (Harms & Lettow, 1986; Graves, 1994). For example, writers move back and forth among the components - - finding a topic, drafting, redrafting, revising, and publishing - - rather than progressing step by step. While moving back and forth among the writing components, writers encounter overlaps with reading tasks. Writers are reading as they write. Even after writers complete a component, such as drafting, they will use some of the same tasks to survey, or read, the meaning that has been created (Graves, 1994).

Overlaps in the Written Processes as Ideas Are Generated

As readers read, they may generate ideas for their own writing. These ideas may come from the content or from the piece serving as a model for writing. Then, they move from reading to writing using some of the same tasks (Routman, 1995; Harms & Lettow, 1986). Writers as they write may discover that they need to do more reading so they will have adequate content or may refer to a work that can serve as a model for their compositions (Gordon, 1992).

Integration of Reading and Language Arts

A case has been made for the integration of instruction for reading and writing. Both processes involve composing. In doing so, readers and writers respond with many common tasks: Readers compose ideas from written language; writers compose ideas for others to interpret through reading. Integrating the instruction for these processes is not only efficient, nurturing the abilities in both processes, but is meaningful to the students. Another result of integration is that instruction and assessment can be related more closely.

Many experiences can be included in the instructional program that can integrate the reading and writing processes. Among these experiences are quality literature and instruction in applying common tasks to the processes.

An Integrated Reading-Writing Program in a Second Grade Classroom

The purpose of the paper is to apply instruction in reading tasks to writing experiences and to trace the effects of instruction in specific reading tasks to children's writing. As a second grade teacher, I have monitored my teaching and the children's responses to show the effectiveness and efficiency of capitalizing on the common aspects of reading and writing. Some of the tasks typically presented in my second grade reading program that have commonality with writing are story elements with a focus on

characterization, recognition of the elements of reality and fantasy, following a sequence of ideas, and understanding main ideas and supporting details.

The monitoring of the instructional program and the assessment of students' writing were conducted from October to December of the school year. The teacher's instructional logs and student-teacher conference forms of six children with an analysis of their application of tasks presented in the reading instructional program to their writing is reported in the next section.

Supporting the Integration of the Language Tasks

To support these goals, an extensive literature base was developed. Hanson (1987) emphasizes that to become effective readers and writers, children need to be immersed in print. Listening to quality literature provides content and models of many genres in literature. Quality literature experiences can be the basis for students' interaction with text. Books can be reread through whole class study and small group interactions. This involvement with quality literature can influence students' sense of story. Having a knowledge of the elements of story supports students as they engage in the reading and writing processes. Utilizing books with common structure can facilitate this.

The study of authors and their engagement in the writing process can

be a part of literature-based language study. Connections between books and authors help students to understand the process of writing and to develop their own writing voices (Calkins & Harwayne, 1991).

Story elements. Stories with strong characters were chosen for study.

Allard, H. & Marshall, J. (1977). Miss nelson is missing. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Birdseye, T. (1988). Airmail to the moon. S. Gammell, (Il.), New York: Holiday.

Freeman, D. (1964). Dandelion. New York: Reader's Digest.

Houston, G. (1992). My great aunt arizona. New York: HarperCollins.

Lionni, L. (1963). Swimmy. New York: Pantheon.

Lobel, A. (1970). Frog and toad together. New York: HarperCollins.

Marshall, J. (1972). George and martha. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Sendak, M. (1983). Where the wild things are. New York: Scholastic.

Waber, B. (1972). Ira sleeps over. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Discussion developed about the concept of a round character, one who has a range of different characteristics, and dynamic characters, those who initiate action that leads to resolve in the story. After listening to and discussing these stories, students kept a response booklet on each main character.

Brett, J. (1989). The mitten. New York: Putnam.

Brett, J. (1990). Wild christmas reindeer. New York: Scholastic.

Brett, J. (1991). Berlioz the Bear. New York: Scholastic.

dePaola, T. (1988). The legend of indian paintbrush. New York: Scholastic.

Hurwitz, J. (1989). The skating lesson. Boston: Silver Burdett.

Kimmel, E. (1988). The chanukkah guest. New York: Scholastic.

Moore, L. (1969). "The house nobody wanted" from Junk day on juniper street and other easy to read stories. New York: Scholastic.

The use of repeated phrasing as a plot device was introduced to the students with these books.

Galdone, P. (1984). The teeny tiny woman. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Guardino, D. (1989). Is your mama a llama? S. Kellogg, (Il.), New York: Scholastic.

Sendak, M. (1962). Chicken soup with rice. New York: Scholastic.

Recognition of the genres of fantasy and realism. The difference between reality and fantasy was introduced with these stories.

Arnold, C. (1982). The biggest living thing. Minnesota: Carolrhoda Books.

Schlein, M. (1971). My house. J. Lasker, (Il.). Chicago: A Whitman.

Following a sequence of ideas. Retellings and dramatizations of stories helped the children focus on this task. Then, while the children were redrafting their stories, they were asked to check on the logical development of their ideas.

The books on the list were chosen because they had clearly ordered sentences of events. The students read these books and discussed the sequence of events.

Aardema, V. (1975). Bringing the rain to kapiti plain. New York: Scholastic.

Cuts, D. (1979). The house that jack built. D. Silverstein, (Il.). New Jersey: Troll.

Hearn, M. (1989). Not so wise as you suppose. Massachusetts: Silver Burdett.

Sierra, J. (1995). The house that drac built. W. Hillenbrand, (Il.). San Diego: Harcourt Brace.

Weir, L. (1972). Howdy. W. Hoey, (Il.). TX: Steck-Vaughn.

Understanding main ideas and supporting details. Students and teacher identified main ideas and supporting details through discussion in small group and whole group situations. The teacher explained topic sentence, detail sentences, and closing sentence. Students wrote class and individual paragraphs illustrating these

tasks. Also, discussions were centered on the overall theme of the story and the author's purpose in writing it. The task of identifying main ideas and supporting details in stories was introduced through these stories.

Simon, S. & DeGroat, D. (1979). "Animal Fact and Fiction" from Animal Fact/Animal Fable. New York: Crown.

Wescott, A. (1989). Pueblos of the southwest. Massachusetts: Silver Burdett.

Applying instruction in reading tasks to writing. Within reading instruction, the commonality with a writing task was noted. Also, while providing writing instruction, the tasks were related to previous reading instruction. The instructional activities for each of the common tasks in reading and writing are given in the following sections.

Story elements. Character weaves and character clusters were presented to organize ideas about characterization. Character weaves help students organize information about the characters' physical appearance, behavior, and feelings. Character clusters organize information around physical characteristics, vocabulary descriptions, and actions. The teacher monitored the students' writing to determine if there was carryover from these activities.

Story structure (beginning, middle, and ending) was taught through many stories. Students were instructed in the use of story maps and story frames to extend their understanding of story structure and to use in structuring their own stories.

Students delighted in reading and bringing examples of stories with repeated patterns to the teacher and to share with the class. Children frequently pointed out to the teacher their awareness of repetition in stories. Students participated in writing class stories using a repeated pattern.

Recognition of the genres of fantasy and realism. As the teacher read stories representative of the fantasy and realism genres, she explained the characteristics of each genre. The genre of the story was referred to on a consistent basis by the teacher when a story was read. Then as the students became aware of the differences in the genres, they were asked to identify the genre of the read aloud book. Sometimes the children were asked to predict the genre as a book title was presented. From discussions focused on imaginary and real, charts were made detailing the fantasy and reality of a story. As students participated in story retellings and dramatizations, they identified the genre.

Understanding main ideas and supporting details. Students and teacher identified main ideas and supporting details through discussion in small group and whole group situations. The teacher explained topic sentence, detail sentences, and closing sentence. Students wrote class and individual paragraphs illustrating these tasks. Also, discussions were centered on the overall theme of the story and the author's purpose in writing it. The task of identifying main ideas and supporting details in stories was introduced through these stories.

Simon, S. & DeGroat, D. (1979). "Animal Fact and Fiction" from Animal Fact/Animal Fable. New York: Crown.

Wescott, A. (1989). Pueblos of the southwest. Massachusetts: Silver Burdett.

Tracing the Effects of Instruction in Specific Reading Tasks to Children's Writing

The monitoring of the reading instructional program and its reflection in the second-grade children's writing occurred from October to December of a school year. The application of reading tasks to the writing of six students was recorded in teacher logs and conference notes. Examples of the tracing of specific tasks from reading instruction to children's writing responses are presented. For particular children, examples of their writing

before and after reading instruction are given.

Story elements. A sample of a student's writing prior to instruction and discussion about round and dynamic characters is presented below. It illustrates a somewhat limited use of language.

My dog is fun. She is good. I like her. She is nice. She is very good. I like her. She is nice. She is a good dog.

Following instructional activities, the same student reflects a better understanding of characterization.

The witch hides in the sky in the morning and at night. She loves to cast spells. She loves her black cat. She likes to play tricks. She knocks on peoples doors. Then she puts springs in candy jars.

This sample represents a student's early attempt at structuring stories.

One day in winter Sarah and her mom and Jessica looked for the Christmas tree. It was lost. They looked in the house and then they looked under the deck. They found it under the deck and now we can open the presents. We will have fun.

Following instructional activities in story structure, the student shows much more sophisticated development of a story line.

One girl was wanting to plan a garden. She went to her mom and said, "Can I plant a garden?" So the mom said, "You can plant a garden, but you have to take care of the garden". Then the girl went to her room and said yes. Then she thought about what seeds she should plant. She went to the store and looked at all the seeds. She found sunflower seeds and found dandelion seeds, too. She bought them in the store. Two months later they sprouted.

They were just little. Then they were big.

Recognition of the genres of fantasy and realism. The second-grade students often wrote on subjects that were true to life. They enjoyed writing about family and friends. The following example is typical of second graders' realistic stories.

My dog Sam was nice and healthy. My healthy dog ate lots of food. I gave him his favorite healthy food. His favorite healthy food was milk. I am sad he died 5 years ago. He only turned 5 years old.

The second graders seemed to have more difficulty making the bridge to writing fantasy. The sample given below shows a student breaking into fantasy.

My room is magical. It does things when I'm away. The next Monday it was gone. I heard a bang.

Following further instructional activities, discussion with the teacher in a conference and reading many fanciful stories, the student wrote this fantasy.

One day in a house there lived a bear and his son. Their name's were Ted and Tom. Their favorite thing is eating honey. On Christmas night Santa left two jars of honey. Santa said, "Happy Christmas to all and to all a good night".

Following a sequence of ideas. A student's early example of developing of a sequence writing is shown below.

Dad was looking for a tree. He did not find. Then he went back home. Then he went back to the tree place the next morning to get the tree - - but then he got an idea. He planned to get a bigger tree.

Another example from the same student after conferencing with the teacher shows further development in the task.

The time is 1:00 in the morning. I will play a game. Now it is 2:00 in the morning I will jump on my sister. Next it is 3:00 in the morning. I will call my friend. Then it is 4:00 in the morning. I will got to her house. Now it is 5:00 in the morning. Then we'll go play outside...Now it is 8:00 in the night. I will watch the movie. Finally it is 9:00 in the night. I will go to bed.

Concurrent with teaching sequence in the reading/writing block, a unit on time in mathematics was being taught. After further instruction and discussion, the same student wrote this piece.

One day the teacher was missing, but we did have a sub. Then a bear came in the classroom. The bear said, "Let's have Bell Work." So they did Bell Work, next math, then time, now read a book. Then Ryan raised his hand and said, "What book do we read?" "You can do spelling. Turn to page 81 and begin. Then Ryan raised his hand again. Ryan

said, "Where do you put it?" "In spelling", said the sub. Ryan said "OK". Next they had lunch and recess and writing. Brittany had a story that was called the Math Test. It was funny. Next we had reading again. Finally they went home. The next teacher was back.

Understanding a main idea and supporting details. An early example of the use of this task in writing can be seen in the following piece.

A apple is a fruit. A apple is big. Apples grow on trees. I like apples.

Following instruction and discussion, growth can be seen in the child's writing. He has developed a clear main idea and details to support it.

My favorite place is the zoo. You can see a lot of animals. You will see alligators and zebra. There are also some hippopotamus. I think the zoo is nice and cool.

These are my stuffed animals. I play with my stuffed animals. I play school with them and games. Their names are Jon and Santa. I am sad because I lost Santa.

Summary

As second-grade students were read to and read themselves, their writing abilities were sharpened. The teacher's awareness of the close connection between reading and writing tasks enabled her to plan for opportunities to link the common tasks in reading and writing. A literature base offered models of language and focuses for discussion that facilitated the connection between reading and writing tasks. The children's writing clearly demonstrated the transfer of instruction in reading tasks to writing. As readers wrote, they applied the tasks they had experienced in reading.

Professional References

Bromley, K.D. (1988). Language arts: Exploring connections. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Butler, A. & Turbill, J. (1984). Towards a reading and writing classroom. New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Calkins, L.M. & Harwayne, S. (1991). Living between the lines. New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Camborne, B. (1988). The whole story. Auckland: Ashton Scholastic.

Dyson, A.H. (1984). Oral language: The rooting system for learning to write. Language Arts, 58, 776-784.

Gordon, C., Labercane, G., & McEachern, W. (1992). Elementary Reading Process & Practice. Massachusetts: Ginn.

Graves, D.H. (1994). A fresh look at writing. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hanson, J. (1987). When writers read. New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Harms, J.M. & Lettow, L.J. (1986). Fostering ownership of the reading experience. The Reading Teacher, XL, 324-330.

Routman, R. (1995). Donald Graves: Outstanding educator in the language arts. Language Arts, 72, 518-525.

Smith, F. (1994). Understanding Reading. New Jersey: Erlbaum.