Annotated Bibliography of Research in the Teaching of English

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Discourse/Cultural Analysis


Argues educators need to move beyond stereotypical representations of immigrant and other youth from minoritized populations and recognize and engage their hybrid identities. Draws on postcolonial perspectives and critiques of the Asian American model minority stereotype to analyze the narratives of 10 high school students from Indian immigrant families in New York City. Discusses the way students negotiate a range of identities as hyphenated Americans who encounter differences and contradictions at the dynamic intersections of race, culture, class, and gender at home and school.


Contends that in the United States deficit perspectives about bilingualism contribute to school failure among Latino students. Examines the discursive practices of one family to better understand how deficit discourses of assimilation affected them and their two children. Reveals the way parents were influenced by deficit messages which made them support and emphasize accelerated English acquisition. Suggests teachers recognize and support linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom and support the maintenance of multiple cultures.


Offers an example of enacting cultural relevance in the classroom. Draws on a range of qualitative sources to examine one teacher’s interpretation of culturally relevant pedagogy. Illustrates
the way pedagogical practices bumped up against children's ideas about their own and others' cultural and racial positioning in an elementary classroom. Argues this research will help teachers to better understand and respond to the complexities of engaging children in issues of culture and race in diverse public school communities.


Examines storytelling practices among Navajos as an example of a non-Western approach to education. Draws on interviews with eight storytellers about storytelling practices in the past and those they want to see in the future. Discusses the perspectives of Navajo storytellers concerning the importance of the context of storytelling practices. Presents implications of storytelling practices for Navajo education and for changes in Western approaches to schooling.


Describes the implementation of what the authors call *critical language pedagogy* in three predominantly African American, 10th-grade English classes where all students spoke AAVE. Critical language pedagogy refers to instructional practices that guide students' critical examination and to the demythologizing of ideologies surrounding language and dialects, both privileged and stigmatized. Finds that students held conflicting views that "proper English" was better than other dialects and that the dialect they spoke with friends ("slang") was subject to unfair discrimination. Demonstrates how classroom conversations embedded in students' experiences with dialects helped them become more conscious of their own daily code-switching and view language variation as natural and valuable.


Examines how Hmong students tell themselves and others who they are, not only through their speech acts, but also through the practice of dressing. Analyzes two case studies to demonstrate the ways in which young Hmong girls struggle to understand the social relations between Hmong and Thai and the ways they creatively appropriated different styles of dress and speech in an attempt to play with their identities. Reveals how the clothing practices Hmong girls enacted allowed them to imagine futures for themselves.


Draws on work from a long-term teacher/researcher study group to analyze how rural teachers' constructions of youth identity and popular culture framed their selection and teaching of multicultural texts. Teachers constructed adolescents through language as either universal or "other," while always perceiving their own rural students as implied readers. Finds that over time teachers became more critical of dominant codes and challenged their own representations of particular adolescents. Suggests that teachers' perceptions of students' identities influence their willingness to engage struggling students in school literacies.


Demonstrates the contradictory role of parent involvement coordinators charged with increasing participation of low-income immigrant parents. Investigates through ethnography the success of one program that engages Latino/Latina, Asian, and African American parents in an urban elementary school. Draws on theories of social and cultural capital to examine the strategies used by a school-based cultural broker to provide bridging social capital to immigrant
parents. Illustrates the dilemmas and tensions that arise as school staff served as cultural brokers between the dominant culture and diverse parents.

RICHARDSON, E. (2007). 'She was workin like foreal': Critical literacy and discourse practices of African American females in the age of hip hop. *Discourse & Society*, 18(6), 789-809. Examines how three young black women negotiate stereotypical images and representations in rap texts. Gives particular attention to how they apply local knowledge and lived experiences to interpretations as their language both reflects and critiques the gendered, sexualized, racialized, and market-driven values surrounding black females and males. Argues that the women's rhetorical moves indicate a hip hop feminist discourse which acknowledges and challenges oppressive social forces while still disseminating certain scripts about “some” black women as stereotypically hypersexualized and immoral.

ROGERS, R. & MOSLEY, M. (2008). A critical discourse analysis of racial literacy in teacher education. *Linguistics and Education*, 19(2), 107-131. Uses critical discourse analysis to trace how preservice teachers in a teacher education book club draw on multiple discursive, semiotic modes (visual and linguistic) as resources for making meaning around race, racism, and anti-racism. Analyzes how meaning making was distributed across genre, discourse, and style in moment-to-moment interactions. Finds that white teachers tended to foreground anti-racism as mental and verbal while one African American participant defined anti-racism through action. Concludes that all participants achieved a level of racial literacy through ongoing verbal and nonverbal interactions which were met with both support and challenge by other members.

SAVAGE, G. (2008). Silencing the everyday experiences of youth? Deconstructing issues of subjectivity and popular/corporate culture in the English classroom. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 29(1), 51-68. Explores how students at a middle-class, multi-ethnic high school in Australia “produced” themselves in relation to ideologies promoted through popular culture discourses. Demonstrates how students' internalized “popular/corporate gaze” privileged being “brand-savvy,” “white,” “straight,” and “attractive.” Concludes that when teachers fail to engage students effectively in analysis of popular culture they silence texts with the most currency in their lives and deny them critical literacy skills to examine how they are positioned toward certain subjectivities.

WADE, S. E., FAUSKE, J. R., & THOMPSON, A. (2008). Prospective teachers' problem solving in online peer-led dialogues. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(2), 398-442. Uses critical discourse analysis to examine peer-led computer mediated dialogue (CMD) with nine prospective secondary teachers. Explores how participants framed/re-framed problems and sought solutions in cases regarding the teaching of language-minority students through varied components of multicultural education. Finds some participants framed problems as cultural discontinuity and sought solutions in pedagogical change, while most framed problems in deficit terms and sought solutions focused on student compliance. Argues that teacher educators often locate problems of deficit thinking in their own students, and calls for shared responsibility for teaching critically reflective thinking.

**Other Related Research:**


folks see in their own mirrors": Considering colorism within a Sharon Flake narrative. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 51*(8), 660-669.


**Literacy**


Investigates the vocabulary development of fifth-grade students in a diverse, low-income school over the course of a school year. As a formative experiment the university collaborators and classroom teacher met to refine vocabulary instruction over the course of the study. The instructional program consisted of rich and varied language experiences, teaching individual words and word-learning strategies, and fostering word consciousness. Finds that, over the course of the study, students used more sophisticated words, their interests toward vocabulary learning increased, and they demonstrated the use of word-learning strategies independently.


Examines one seventh-grade English language arts teacher’s pedagogical approach to using multiple text types to develop students’ conceptual understandings. Draws upon Cognitive Flexibility Theory (Spiro, Coulson, Feltovich, & Anderson, 2004) as a lens to analyze the data. Finds that the teacher used multiple text types, including memoir, expository texts, photographs, documentaries, docudrama, and Web documents. This educator adopts a teacher-centered approach, requiring a systematic and strategic juxtaposition of texts along with questioning.

Analyzed the perceptions of 120 First Nations, American Indian, and Alaska Native students on their motivation to acquire literacy practices shaped by No Child Left Behind. Finds that students need intrinsic motivation for learning literacy consistent with their own curiosities, need for self-expression and identity construction, participation in authentic literacy events, display of competence, and links to lived-world issues. However, given NCLB mandates, teachers often ignore these students' need for intrinsic motivation, leading to students' sense of alienation from the school world.


Compares two curricula for developing the early literacy skills of preschool-aged children to a comparison condition. Interventions included (1) a comprehensive early language and literacy program or (2) a computer-assisted program to support early literacy skill development. Both interventions complemented the current preschool literacy curriculum. Results for the sample of 507 students show small but positive effects for the two literacy curricula on development of letter knowledge, letter-sound correspondence, book and print knowledge, and emergent writing. Results were also influenced by the minority language status of the students, teacher experience, and other classroom variables.


Studies six classrooms that initiated change through observations, interviews, and analysis of records in an elementary school of 1,450 students in a diverse, poor, and high-crime neighborhood. The literacy framework and related learning communities included components and instructional categories using direct instruction/modeling (focus lessons), guided instruction, collaborative learning, independent practice with conferencing, and assessment in the areas of reading, writing, and oral language. The literacy task force focused first on teacher modeling, then on independent learning, and finally closing the gap between teacher modeling and independent learning through small-group instruction. Finds an increase of approximately 24% in students working at proficient or advanced on the California standardized test in grades 2, 4, and 5. Developing a literacy framework, a common set of vocabulary, and a school-wide plan for implementation with a common set of values created by stakeholders resulted in higher expectations for students and increased time on task for both teachers and students, which in turn resulted in improved opportunities to learn.


Inquires about ways to ensure that all teachers have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to make certain that students develop increasingly sophisticated understandings of literacy. Using observations, interviews, and analysis of student records along with a developmentally structured rubric for teacher case studies in primary grades, one elementary school sought to link student and teacher knowledge change. Questions guiding this research examined how teachers describe their reading of literacy information, analyze running record information, and implement reading instruction based on miscue analysis. The developmental literacy knowledge rubric further identified declarative, procedural, early conditional, and conditional knowledge. Results show teachers' acquisition of literacy knowledge was affected by teaching background, previous educational and coaching experiences, and literacy needs of the students in their current grade level, suggesting that differentiated staff development is essential to support professional growth.

Investigates a home repeated-reading intervention for improving the reading accuracy, fluency and independent reading skills of eight struggling second-grade students in an urban school district. Through the intervention all students read more than 10,000 additional words at home. Finds improvements in the reading accuracy and fluency of all participants on each text read, and also improved independent reading skills used in non-intervention stories. Error rates improved for students who were given a high level of support from their parents; parents who were learning English as a new language provided little word-level help. Suggests future adjustments to the intervention, including a parent-training component.


Examines the quality of language and literacy instruction in 135 preschool classrooms serving at-risk students. Developed two rating scales to (1) quantify the quality of this instruction, (2) identify possible predictors such as teacher, classroom, and lesson characteristics, and (3) determine the relationship between procedural fidelity of instruction of lessons to the quality of the instruction. Finds a scarcity of quality instruction; few characteristics were associated with exemplary instruction; and procedural fidelity to lesson implementation was not associated with quality instruction.


Encourages early childhood teachers and researchers to shift perspectives from what we think children do not know to what it is they do know through a variety of contexts that initiate talk for preschoolers' emerging literacy. Demonstrates ways in which the 4- and 5-year-olds in this Deweyan philosophy-based school engaged in meaning making about books from various texts including an informational book, storybook, and scrapbook of family photos. Combines data analysis with Halliday's framework (1978) and teaching reflection as preschool children used language to apply genre-specific knowledge and concepts about print to make reading personal and useful. Provides examples of using literacy artifacts to value and reinforce talk as a literacy-learning tool.

**Other Related Research:**


**Literary Response/Literature/Narrative**


Analyzes elementary students' talk involved in adopting characters' roles in drama activities. Finds that 76% of talk focused on textual aspects; 7%, personal aspects; and 17%, social aspects. In understanding their characters, students adopted three stances: entering into the story world to plan/discuss their intended portrayals, immersing in the story world through the characters' roles, and reflecting on the story world.


Analyzes the cultural models of literature reflected in the Minnesota and Wisconsin English/language arts standards. Finds three prevailing models: literature as an autonomous, opaque text for analysis, literature as a tool for teaching critical reading/thinking skills, and literature as an expression of cultures/world views and a common cultural heritage. Finds less focus on models of literature as providing personal enjoyment; literature as a multifaceted, ideological object that can be analyzed from different critical perspectives; literature as a tool for mediating personal values; or literature as enabling connections with others through comparing culturally-specific ways of meaning-making. Suggests that these state standards reflect more traditional theories of literature instruction.


Examines the portrayal of cultural models of bilingualism and identity affiliations based on language and cultural practices in seven Latino children's books. Analyzes practices of and attitudes toward Spanglish, standard Spanish, and individual and societal bilingualism, as well as how characters construct cross-cultural identities. Demonstrates, through cultural model analyses, how models found in these books inform and are informed by cultural models of being bilingual and belonging to Latino bilingual communities in the U.S.

Analyzes a literature circle discussion of *Shiloh*. Documents the influence of class and gendered discursive practices on student responses. Draws on critical discourse analysis to describe how the ways these fifth-grade students enact class and gender roles results in undesired literacy behaviors.


Investigates the effects of foregrounding on the process of defamiliarization of students of literature and engineering, and how they develop refamiliarization. Describes how these readers employed which refamiliarizing strategies and the role of feeling in responding to the reading of a foregrounded short story. Data were analyzed in terms of how readers processed text using both textual elements and world knowledge. Challenging texts that provoked defamiliarization led to use of strategies to comprehend text, build an interpretation, and subsequently develop a new perspective on the world around them and on themselves.


Examines structure and content of narrative interpretations of 151 adolescents, average and above academically, in grades 4-12 from six schools in a major urban centre in Western Canada. Participants read a short story incorporating two substories and multiple layers of meaning, summarized it, described the two main characters, generated story morals, and answered multiple choice interpretation questions. Analyzes responses for both structural complexity and social-psychological content of narrative thought. Demonstrates a clear developmental pattern in structural complexity as well as a shift in social-psychological thought; students' understanding moved from an intentional focus on immediate and specific mental states to an increasingly interpretive focus on enduring states, character traits, and second-order psychological interpretations.


Summarizes the results of a British government review of poetry instruction in 86 schools (www.ofsted.gov.uk). Finds that poetry instruction is weaker than other aspects of English instruction and that teachers lacked knowledge of poetry, resulting in limitations in the types of poems studied. Highly-rated schools worked with poets and encouraged students to contribute poems to competitions. Notes the example of one school that emphasizes the use of oral interpretations, poetry writing, and making poetry books readily available.


Studies the content of *Ebony Jr!* by situating it within historical, political, educational, and cultural contexts of the 1970s and 1980s through the lens of Black Studies. Examines the magazine itself in terms of layout, content, target audience, and overall trends; the market at the time of inception; an overview of the corporate structure; political socialization of children; influence of Black Liberation (most notably Racial Uplift) and Feminist movements' ideologies; educational trends and practices of the time; and the positioning of the Black child in the community. Concludes by situating *Ebony Jr!* within the context of African American children's literature and the Black Aesthetic.

Investigates the evocation of mental imagery and affect in high school English/French bilinguals to determine whether the linguistic demands of reading in a second language limit ability to form non-verbal text representations of literary stories. Subjects rated French- and English-language story paragraphs for the degree of either mental imagery or emotional response evoked and reported in writing their imagery or emotions in response to the two highest-rated paragraphs. Finds that as bilingual readers progress in their ability to read in their L2, reports of imagery and affect become closer in kind and number to those reported in response to reading the same text in their first language.


Examines Firefly (Preschool) and Seesaw (K–1) Scholastic book club order forms from September of 2004 through June of 2005. Identifies authors and illustrators of children’s literature, particularly those of color, routinely included or excluded. Indicates that books written and illustrated by European Americans dominated both book clubs to an extreme degree, whereas books written and illustrated by people of color were frequently excluded.


Documents how three students, all members of a “regular” American Literature class in a school that is highly invested in The College Board’s Advanced Placement program, forge hybrid social languages from the discourse of formal literary analysis and the discourse of digital writing. Demonstrates how they position themselves as “serious literature students” by employing tools of literary analysis modeled and expected by English teachers at this school, and as “web-literate communicators,” by playing with language in ways not sanctioned in English classes. Explores how students borrow from other intertextual social languages to read class texts in new and unsanctioned ways, sometimes pushing against dominant school culture.

Other Related Research:


**Professional Development/Teacher Education**


Examines an instructor's use of dialogically organized instruction and participation of two graduate students/teachers in a reading instruction course. Identifies tensions between the instructor's own theory and practice of dialogic instruction, as well as between the discourses of fulfilling the goal of fostering teachers' use of dialogic methods and the need to allow for teachers to experience dialogic learning. Teachers also experienced tensions between the theoretical perspectives they were acquiring in the course and their own teaching methods—for example, in terms of teaching reading comprehension and facilitating literature discussion.


Analyzes reflections of two groups of preservice teachers during an undergraduate literacy methods course focused on effective literacy instruction for children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The preservice teachers worked in small teaching teams in upper-elementary classrooms to create, teach, and reflect on their one-hour-long literacy lessons. The authors describe the team reflective conversations on three dimensions: children as individual learners; relationships between learners and lesson content/structure; and themselves as teachers. One team shows much greater competence on these dimensions than the other. Questions are raised about the roles and responsibilities of the course instructor, the lead author, for addressing the attitudes and dispositions of the preservice teachers who displayed less competence. The authors conclude that they do not have answers for how to handle preservice teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions when they do not attend to students as individual learners and students' relationship with the content.


Compares the effects of teachers receiving versus not receiving literacy professional development on their instruction for the period of a year. Finds that teachers receiving reading comprehension training provided more comprehension instruction and teachers receiving writing training provided more writing instruction and had students write more than did teachers not receiving this training.


Examines how six professional learning communities within one urban high school engage in school-based inquiry over the course of a school year. Analyzes videotaped observations, fieldnotes, and participant interviews to yield an in-depth view of the practices of the critical
friends groups (CFG) and their perceived role in school improvement. Draws out the facilita-
tive and constraining aspects of four design features of the groups: the diverse menu of activi-
ties, decentralized structures, interdisciplinary membership, and reliance on protocols. Determin-
es that though fewer than 10% of interviewed participants regarded the CFG as a weak or
negative practice, the tensions within the design features contributed to a lack of coherence in
the school's professional development, hampered collective action, privileged general pedagogy
over subject-specific issues, and may have interfered with sustained inquiry.

36-43.

Reports on an Australian school-based teacher inquiry group's exploration of digital literacies.
Draws on audiotaped research conversations to illustrate how teachers investigated the barriers
to using digital texts through shared inquiry. Shows that teachers reported knowing little about
students' home uses of digital texts; this negatively affected the possibility that digital texts would
be incorporated other than as a final product (e.g. PowerPoint presentations). Finds that the
group made small adjustments through their collaboration in their willingness to consider pos-
sibilities for expanding use of digital texts.


Examines how a service-learning writing tutoring program affected preservice teachers' peda-
gogy of writing instruction. The study describes three preservice teachers' experiences in a course
about teaching writing in elementary school that included weekly tutoring sessions at a local
community center. The authors discuss service-learning as a "third space" of interaction and
present a negotiation model of simultaneously working toward both service and learning.

course on language and literacy across the disciplines as imaginative and critical practices. *La-
Fall2007/LaMonde.htm

Conducts a three-year study of the infusion of arts/digital-media-based learning in a preservice
literacy methods course. Finds that preservice teachers learn to construct multimodal texts
through active video/digital productions. Analysis of pre-post questionnaires in year two finds
a shift from a functional/communicative to a more multimodal/critical perception of literacy.

LARRABEE, L., LEBLANC, C., NOBLE, R., SCOTCH, R., & WHITE, L. (2008). *Focus on lit-
eracy: Professional development audit*. Boston, MA: Community Training and Assistance Center.

Audits professional development programs in Duval County, Florida schools based on inter-
view and focus group data from approximately 145 staff members, 863 online surveys, and
documentation of the practices of 12 teachers in 11 schools (K-8 classrooms). Finds a relation-
ship between professional development and student achievement—for each day of training,
student test scores increased by a half point; students of teachers who took a 14-day-program
scored seven points higher than students of who did not take the training. Professional devel-
opment, coupled with a principal's support for professional development and ongoing coach-
ing, served to foster use of new teaching techniques, receiving follow-up feedback, and engag-
ing in dialogue and collaboration with peers. The most effective teachers applied knowledge of
students' literary practices to integrate and scaffold their instruction, while the less effective
teachers employed more fragmented activities, lacked planning, did not scaffold instruction,
and did not connect with students.

Investigates the influence of teacher competence on third-grade students' reading achievement in public and independent schools in Sweden. Data from 10,000 students in the Progress in Reading Literacy Study 2001 are used to compare students in independent schools and public schools. Students in independent schools achieved better on the reading test than did students in public schools, but when parents' education was controlled for, the effect on students' achievement of school type disappeared. Teacher certification for teaching in the early grades had a strong effect on students' mean reading test scores in both school types, while no significant effects of teacher experience, age, gender, inservice training, or cooperation were established.


Analyzes 41 elementary teachers' perceptions of changes related to professional development in literacy instruction methods over a two-year period. Finds that teachers reflect on change from different perspectives—the degree to which they perceive themselves as change agents or as learners. Changes identified occurred in terms of three different phases—a shift from content to student-centered practices, increased collaboration with colleagues, and an increased need for changes in school policies to support more teacher autonomy and support for students.


Outlines a professional development program that engaged 30 secondary teachers in reflective inquiry around using formative literacy assessments to inform instruction designed to support students' learning through reading. Examines teacher interviews, fieldnotes of meetings and classroom observations, teaching artifacts, as well as formative and summative assessment data to develop six case studies of participating teachers' experiences. Describes teachers' instructional change cycles of goal-setting, instructional planning and implementation, and analysis. Reports that all case studies demonstrated meaningful changes in planning and instruction related to student needs.


Analyzes factors that have limited the integration of recent theoretical perspectives toward adolescent literacy into secondary education. Argues that a teacher's views of literacy learning, of students' "learning identities", and of their own "teaching identity" are central to supporting more meaningful efforts toward change. Reflects upon data from a three-year Secondary School Literacy Initiative project through the lenses of identity, adolescent literacy, and teachers' perspectives of learning. Identifies developing teachers' sense of agency through supporting options for literacy instruction as key dimensions in moving toward more socioculturally-based literacy experiences within schools.


Conducts an historical review of the influence of English education research on students' English instruction and learning; classroom dynamics shaping literacy learning; how English teachers, students, and classrooms are defined by cultural and historical forces; and shifts in the English curriculum in a global, digital world. Charts the impact of a focus in the late 1980s and
1990s on the application of language/sociolinguistics, cognitive processing, and social aspects in research methods on English teaching. Identifies a related influence of Vygotsky and Bakhtin along with ethnomethodological and sociolinguistic methods during that time period on analysis of classroom dialogic practices fostering literacy learning. Notes a later focus on the importance of understanding teachers' and students' beliefs, discourses, and identities related to race, class, and gender differences. Finds that more recent research on uses of digital literacies operating in globalized spaces serves to challenge traditional notions of literacy learning. Contrasts the theoretical and methodological traditions of the field with current reductive notions of literacy testing and "scientific" research. Recommends the development of richer theoretical frameworks to translate research into practice as well as engaging teachers in classroom research as central to their professional development.


Explores 20 preservice teachers' visions about culturally responsive literacy teaching in elementary classrooms. Identifies the following themes: elementary classrooms should serve as literacy communities; literacy teachers should serve as orchestrators within these communities; students should be active community members; learner-centered curriculum is the key to literacy development; and promoting ownership of literacy for diverse students is an essential societal goal. Two "blind spots" are also identified: classroom management and parental involvement.

*Other Related Research:*


**Reading**


Determines if the inclusion of adding kinesthetic comprehension process motions (CPMs) used with 513 (257 experimental, 256 control) participants in an urban, low socioeconomic status, underperforming school could significantly increase students’ comprehension and metacognition. Investigates the instructional conditions wherein CPM lessons are effective, how many comprehension processes are used automatically by the participants and how many minutes per day and days per week a typical lesson should last for participants to master each comprehension process. Demonstrates that the experimental participants outperformed the control participants in the area of comprehension mean scores on the SAT-9, and in their abilities to infer and perform other implicit comprehension processes. Suggests that when CPM lessons occur for at least six consecutive days, primary students’ implicit and explicit comprehension and vocabulary scores on criterion- and norm-referenced tests rise significantly over those of participants who did not receive the instruction.


Studies the effects of sustained silent reading program on students’ attitudes towards reading and reading habits for three times during a one-year period. Finds that the program fostered significant improvement in students reading books for pleasure and that such activity was pleasurable. At the same time, there was a decline in the number of students who spent more than one hour reading books for leisure after school.


Examines the relationship of reading performance to difficulty level of material. Participants were 83 fourth graders from four urban schools. Comprehension was assessed through open-ended questions. Finds a significant correlation between reading rate and word recognition accuracy. However, reading rate and comprehension did not correlate significantly. Discusses implications of these findings for assessing reading progress for urban fourth-grade students.


Analyzes “high-achieving” students’ performance on NAEP tests since the early 1990s. Finds that the bottom 10 percent of students have made marked gains on fourth-grade reading tests, while students in the top 10 percent have made minimal gains. Sixty percent of teachers indicate that low-performing students are their “top priority,” while 23% of teachers indicate that “academically advanced” students are their “top priority.” At the same time, 86% of teachers concurred with the belief in the importance of focusing equally on all students regardless of background or achievement.


Compares 123 Latino ELL versus native-English first-third grade students’ growth in instructional reading level, word and sound level features of reading, comprehension, and fluency.
using repeated measures over a two-year period. Follows two cohorts—one from first into second grade, and another, from second into third grade. Finds no difference in growth in instructional reading level, but the native-English students' levels were about one-half-grade higher at each comparison time point in the study. Finds a difference in word/sound level reading primarily due to ELL students starting at a much lower level of phonological awareness than native-English peers, but then ELL students catch up through a steep learning curve to achieve equivalent rates by end of the second year. Native-English students had only a slightly higher growth on reading words in isolation/phonetic knowledge and no difference in growth in comprehension or fluency. Given the steep learning curve in phonological awareness for Latino students, suggests the need to provide early support to Latino students in acquiring English phonological awareness.


Summarizes findings of 29 research studies designed to improve the comprehension of expository text for students with learning disabilities. Categorizes interventions as content enhancement (i.e., advance and graphic organizers, visual displays, mnemonic illustrations, and computer-assisted instruction) or cognitive strategy instruction (i.e., text structure, main idea identification, summarization, questioning, cognitive mapping, reciprocal teaching). Discusses treatment outcomes in relation to the various instructional approaches, student characteristics, instructional features, methodological features, strategy maintenance, and generalization components. Provides implications for classroom practice and future research directions.


Examines the effects of manipulating objects corresponding to the characters and actions in a text, on students' reading comprehension (six- to eight-year-olds). Two conditions were compared: a manipulation and a re-read condition. Finds that children in the manipulation condition provided more accurate answers to questions about the texts.


Focuses on the Critical Word Factor, a measure of text difficulty designed specifically for texts used by beginning readers. Investigates the validity of the Critical Word Factor from data on beginning readers' speed, accuracy, and comprehension after students read texts with different numbers of critical words. Shows main effects for the Critical Word Factor on reading speed, accuracy, and comprehension; results for speed and accuracy were stronger than were those for comprehension. Finds that the model predicted the word difficulty accurately.


Presents early findings from the Enhanced Reading Opportunities (ERO) study, a demonstration evaluation of two supplemental literacy programs, Reading Apprenticeship Academic Literacy and Xtreme Reading, programs that aim to improve the reading comprehension skills and school performance of struggling readers. The ninth-grade readers in the study, performing two to five years below grade level as they enter high school, were enrolled in a class designed to help readers employ the strategies used by proficient readers to improve their com-
prehension skills, and increase their motivation to read more and to enjoy what they read. The preliminary results focus on the first of two cohorts of ninth-grade students who are participating in the study. Although the two supplemental programs both had a statistically significant effect on the students' comprehension, 76% of participating students were still reading two or more years behind proficient peers at the end of ninth grade.


Compares test data from 2002 to 2006/2007 sufficient data on state and NAEP tests. Of 28 states with sufficient data, 17 states had moderate-to-large gains in percentages proficient in reading at the elementary level; 14 states had moderate-to-large gains at the middle school level; and eight states had moderate-to-large gains at the high school. Gaps between African American and white students' reading scores were more likely to narrow than increase. Gains on NAEP were smaller than on state tests; NAEP tests also show larger demographic reading achievement gaps than state tests, possibly due to lack of student motivation in taking the NAEP tests, that state tests are more aligned to state standards/instruction than the NAEP tests, and that states lower the bar for what counts as "proficient." Notes the difficulty in attributing gains to NCLB given the range of different programs not necessarily related to NCLB.


Analyzes the effects of one year of schooling on 6,327 British 15-year-olds on reading performance, reading engagement, and reading activities in 2000. Finds only a minimal effect on reading performance and no effect on engagement or activities, as well as little differences across schools, although the effect was larger for low SES schools. Calls for more use of measures of engagement and activities as part of assessment procedures.


Investigates the effects of reward proximity and choice of reward on the reading motivation of third-grade students as measured by indicators of task persistence. Finds that students who were given a book as a reward and students who received no reward were more motivated to engage in subsequent reading than students who received a token reward. Indicates that the proximity of the reward to the desired behavior is a particularly salient factor in enhancing reading motivation. Implies that carefully chosen rewards can foster a culture of reading motivation.


Compares 215,000 fourth graders' reading scores from 39 nations around the world. U.S. students ranked in the middle range of countries in the world, scoring the same as they did in 2001, despite spending more class time on reading instruction—an average of six hours a week—than students in other countries. Russia, Hong Kong, and Singapore made marked improvements reflecting programmatic reforms in those countries, joining three Canadian provinces, Luxembourg, Hungary, and Italy as the top scoring countries. About half of U.S. students demonstrated the ability to understand abstract messages, make inferences, and explain ideas; 12% could interpret complex information and character traits. Large achievement gaps for U.S. students persist.

Studies reading practices and choices of urban adolescents. Finds that adolescents do engage in frequent reading outside of school within the contexts of their peer networks in ways that serve to enhance their social identities. However, reading novels outside of school is the only practice with significant relationships to school grades. Recommends the need for further focus on what motivates adolescents to read in terms of both developing social identities and enhancing academic achievement.


Uses a randomized design to investigate the effects of an enriched reading program on 226 urban elementary students' (third through sixth grade) reading comprehension, oral reading fluency, and attitude toward reading in 2 elementary schools. A schoolwide framework (SEM-R) provides enriched reading experiences including daily supported independent reading of challenging self-selected books using differentiated reading instruction. All students participated in the direct instructional approach, Success for All, for 90 minutes each morning. Finds that students in the SEM-R treatment group scored statistically significantly higher on both oral reading fluency tests and attitudes toward reading scales when compared to control group students.


Focuses on the influence of linguistic markers on text comprehension in ecologically valid contexts. Participants were 561 13- to 14-year-old students from Dutch pre-vocational secondary education. Each participant read an integrated or fragmented version of an experimental text. Shows how poor readers in secondary education benefit from coherence marking while answering text comprehension questions.


Seeks explanations for southern California high school students' low performance on standardized tests. Finds that despite their previous positive attitude towards reading, the use of the Accelerated Reader (AR) program in their schools was having a negative effect on their attitudes, taking too much of their time, afforded limited book selections, and the evaluation methods employed were not valid.


Investigates the relationship between reading comprehension development of 389 students (grades 8-10) in their dominant language (L1, Dutch) and a foreign language (L2, English). Tests were administered for reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar knowledge, processing efficiency in both languages, and metacognitive knowledge about reading. Finds that L1 and L2 reading comprehension are highly related skills.

Surveys 501 children aged 5-17 and their parents. More than half read books for fun two to three times a week; their favorite books are self-selected. Reading for fun declines steadily from age 8 on through adolescence. Their online participation supplements and extends rather than replaces their reading experience. Sixty-two percent prefer to read print over computer texts. Parents are a primary resource for book suggestions, but they often have difficulty locating information about books.

**Other Related Research:**


Second Language Literacy


Examines, through a formative experiment (a responsive, dynamic, mixed-methods approach), how to foster literacy in a seventh- and eighth-grade language arts classroom among native Spanish speakers within a team of English language learners over an entire school year. Studies 14 Spanish-speaking participants who were at the initial stages of reading and writing in English and had a range of prior schooling/literacy experiences in Spanish and had been in the U.S. from 1.5-24 months. Includes instructional modifications/interventions such as, a) expanding the range and volume of reading materials, b) identifying supports to make difficult texts accessible, and c) scaffolding writing experiences, which all led to changes in the instructional environment. Focuses on moving from whole-class to small-group work and individual and paired work as well as proactive individual interventions. Finds intervention generally successful due to selection of appropriate, comprehensible, culturally relevant reading materials, the realization of implications of students' lives on reading engagement, and better assessments for the population.


Compares published research and second language methods texts with the issues/topics identified by ESOL certified teachers in one school district. Interviews and observations from two years in this district were analyzed and resulted in the following categories for comparison with research literature and methods texts: 1) working with students at varying proficiency levels, 2) materials, 3) development of decoding skills, 4) writing skills, 5) vocabulary skills, 6) thematic teaching, 7) love of reading, 8) coping with mainstream teachers and school requirements, and 9) students’ literacy and oral proficiency in their first languages. Two texts that address all of these areas are cited in the article. Describes important areas for consideration in the area of teacher education for English language learners.

Examines the mutual learning between three- to six-year-old children and their grandparents in Sylheti/Bengali-speaking and monolingual English-speaking families. Draws from sociocultural theory, notions of “prolepsis” (when a parent brings memories from their own past into current interactions with their child and visions for his or her future) and the “funds of knowledge” framework. Explores questions using exploratory survey and then ethnographic case studies of nine families. Finds that children take part in many activities with their grandparents (e.g., go to a park, talk about members of the family and family history, visit others, religious activities, watch TV, shop, tell stories, cook). Shows that children engage grandparents in learning (e.g., solitaire on the computer, using the built-in computer mouse) often code-switching between English and Sylheti. Finds touch as a communicative mode for learning by both children and grandparents and lists the many skills and concepts that are learned in the child-grandparent relationship, many of which are relevant to formal education.


Uses verbal protocol data to explore English-foreign-language-learners writers’ planning behavior while engaged in academic writing tasks (in terms of time spent on planning operations) in relation to three independent variables: (a) the participants’ level of proficiency (pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced) in the second language (L2); (b) the language of composition: native (L1, Spanish) versus foreign language (L2, English) writing; (c) the stage of the composition in which planning operations occurred (composition time was divided into three periods). Finds that the language of the composition did not explain differences in planning time, but the participants’ level of L2 proficiency did. Also finds that proficiency influenced the different amount of time devoted to planning in the L1 and the L2 tasks and the participants’ coordination of goals as well as the range of constraints guiding their planning behavior.


Examines how the use of primary- or English-language storybooks for home reading combined with classroom storybook reading and vocabulary instruction influences acquisition of English vocabulary in preschool children. Conducted two six-week sessions of the combined home-school treatments, with students randomly assigned to receive the treatment first in their primary language or in English. During the second session, the alternate language was used. Results from posttests show that home storybook reading in the primary language was as effective or better for English vocabulary learning. Recommends the use of a combination method that involves language support activities in the home connected to classroom instructional activities to enhance English learners’ vocabulary growth.


Uses qualitative methods (portraiture, ethnography) and theoretical constructs (new literacy studies and “repertoires of practice”) to document and describe one high school-aged immigrant’s experience to, and through, English literacy. Investigates the role of transnational experiences through field notes, formal interviews, and informal conversations as the participant experienced a relatively narrow and single dimension of what literacy is in school. Suggests conceptualizing instruction for secondary immigrant students that incorporates their funds of knowledge, academic strengths, needs, and transnational literacy practices.

Reviews an extensive database of published studies and professional technical reports on the assessment of English language learners (ELLs). Discusses issues of norming, validity, defining language proficiency and academic English, technical quality of tests, fairness in testing, and accommodations for ELLs. Identifies a serious issue in Opportunity to Learn (OTL), wherein students have not had equal access to quality content instruction and materials to support their learning. Outlines major flaws in the current use of high stakes testing with ELLs, and proposes a series of recommendations based on the research to combat their inappropriate use.


Calls for literacy instruction to more closely align with what adult female ESL students see as their most important goals. Examines how literacy skills can be exchanged for forms of capital in complex settings of globalization and homogenization. Finds that the positive interpretation that students had of their testing and learning experiences was not supported by their out-of-school experiences (e.g., good job, going to college). Critiques standardized testing and the many classes devoted to review for the tests, inauthentic language use/materials, and lack of meaningful literacy instruction related to students' most important goals (e.g., finding a job, communicating with landlord, child's teacher). Illustrates a dichotomy between value of test scores and diplomas and how easily these forms of capital are converted into power in certain contexts.


Examines the experiences and expectations by English as a Second Language and mainstream teachers as they work with their middle school students. Field notes from classroom observations, interviews with teachers and participants, and teacher lesson plans created the corpus of data. Compares two mainstream teachers according to their view of their responsibility for the English language learners (ELLs), teaching approaches, classroom dynamics, ELLs' participatory behaviors and mainstream students' participatory behaviors. Confirmed Ladson-Billings' (1994) work that students are influenced by the way that their teachers approach them and described the necessity to 1) show interest in ELLs' culture, 2) encourage ELLs to share their cultural experiences, 3) include ELLs as full participants, 4) model how teachers appreciate and embrace ELLs' cultural differences, and 5) encourage mainstream students to support ELLs' classroom learning.

*Other Related Research:*


**Technology/Media/Information Literacy**


Comparing the influence of use of Web-based portfolio assessment versus conventional assessment on junior high students' achievement and performance. Finds no significant influence on achievement, but significant influence in enhancing self-perceived learning performance, particularly for low-motivation students.


Analyzes 228 teachers' use of and opinions about their adventure learning (AL) experience with a six-month trans-Arctic dogsled expedition (www.polarhusky.com). Adventure learning enables teacher and students to explore real-world issues through authentic experiences. Analysis revealed three affordances of the AL approach for K-12 classrooms: 1) online dialogue and collaboration opportunities, 2) inquiry-based curriculum with authentic real-time content, and 3) motivation for inquiry through multiple modes of media.


Posits the need to redefine the English curriculum by expanding notions of reading and composing processes to the digital literacies that students use daily rather than the institutionalized school practices that privilege print texts and linear reading tasks. Moreover, suggests a shift.
from the passive consumption of digital to the production and reading of texts within Web 2.0 and the multimodal representation enabled by Web 2.0 tools and online spaces. Examines how preservice English education and middle-school students employed current digital literacies practices leading to their adopting critical stances toward both the content and the tools themselves.


Examines college students’ perceptions of which aspects of blogging assisted them in learning course content and the process of commenting on peers’ blog posts. While reading peers’ blogs was most helpful in acquiring course content and in gaining diverse peer perspectives, students needed more assistance in reviewing and critiquing peers’ posts.


Surveys 168 teachers on their uses of blogs in their classrooms over a two-year period and then interviews 12 teachers on perceptions of students’ learning and analyzes teachers’ blogs. Finds that 60% of frequent bloggers post assignments on their blogs. The more teachers use blogs in the classroom, the more frequent their students’ postings. Eighty-nine percent of teachers indicate that blogging changed their instructional methods. Teachers note increased peer interaction and collaborative sharing of ideas among students and between teachers and students, particularly in terms of providing immediate feedback through comments, as well as more positive engagement with learning.


Explores online literature discussions between preservice teachers and middle school students. This case study analyzes dialogue between three preservice teachers and nine students. Preservice teachers tended to gravitate towards traditional classroom discourse within the computer-mediated environment. Implications of this study include the need for strategies to help teachers using computer-mediated environments for literature discussion be able to synthesize and focus discourse into co-created “group texts.”


Conducts case-studies of three “struggling reader” adolescents’ uses of popular culture texts. Draws on resistance theory to find that their uses are influenced in productive and limiting ways by adult expectations, creating conflicts that themselves can foster adolescents’ study of issues related to responses to and construction of popular culture texts.


Examines the influence of prior knowledge, writing task (argument versus information), and hypertext format on college students’ comprehension of hypertext. Students with high knowledge had higher comprehension, spent less time processing, and had higher scores on a comprehension posttest than low-knowledge students. An argument task led to more causal connectives and more transformed information in students’ papers, whereas a summary task resulted in more temporal connectives and paraphrases. Presentation of the material by source
resulted in better macrostructural comprehension on the posttest, whereas the topic format resulted in better microstructural comprehension.


Studies use of speech acts and argument quality of students' online dyadic chat debates about nuclear power and genetically modified organisms. Finds that students learned to employ argument speech acts and engage in collaborative language use in their debate, achieving a relatively high level of sophistication on most of the debates, particularly for females.


Reports the results of a mixed method study, including national telephone survey augmented by focus groups, completed by the Pew Internet and American Life Project in collaboration with the National Commission on Writing. Examines what teens and their parents say about the role and impact of technological writing on both in-school and out-of-school writing. Finds a disconnect between students' perception of what writing is supposed to be (e.g., "formal" writing) and the writing practices in which they engage, such as email and instant/text messaging. Ninety-three percent of respondents report writing for pleasure, but do not perceive personal written communication as "real" writing, even though the majority of teens reported incorporating some aspects of their personal digital writing into formal writing in school. African American students reported more frequent writing on a daily basis although the amount of writing done several times per week was the same across racial groups. Girls reported engaging in personal electronic communication on daily basis more than boys. "Multichannel" teens who spend the most time using a range of electronic communications are no more likely to engage in out-of-school writing than their non-"multichannel" peers. The respondents believe that writing is important to their future success and are in favor of more in-school writing time and, ironically, parents surveyed place a higher value on the role of computers in improving teens' writing than do teens themselves.


Analyzes the implementation of commercial e-folios at four teacher education programs using a survey method. Finds the need to distinguish between the e-folio system and the assessment plan, in that programs need to develop authentic assessment methods and select a platform consistent with those methods. While e-folios served to benefit participation in the program accreditation process and organizing information and student work, the challenges often were associated with the faculty concerns about implementation. Suggests the need for a coordinator to assist implementation, having consistent requirements and an assessment system, and taking time for implementation.


Analyzes survey results of 388 two-year college writing programs conducted in 2005. While 81% offer online composition courses that would transfer to a university, only 25% offer online developmental composition (level below transfer composition), 11% offer online developmental reading, and 5% offer online ESL composition. About half offer an advisory related to technology literacy and 8% have a technology literacy requirement—a low level of technology support resulting in students dropping online courses. Only 44% have enrollment caps for online courses, and these caps are often relatively high. Fifty-eight percent noted that on-campus ac-
cess to computer labs was a problem. Seventy-seven percent offer training in online course instruction, but less training in multimodal writing assignment design; 43% offer no compensation for training. Fifty-seven percent do not use electronic portfolios; only 3 programs report use of campus-wide e-portfolios, for example, the eFolio tool offered by the Minnesota campuses. Forty percent express an interest in developing multimodal assignments. Eighteen percent were “very satisfied,” 46% were “somewhat satisfied,” 23% were “somewhat dissatisfied,” and 13% were “very dissatisfied” with their program’s attempts to integrate technology in teaching composition.


Conducts a meta-analysis of 20 studies on effects of use of digital tools on middle-school students' literacy learning. Finds a positive effect (size of 0.489) for the benefits of using digital tools, particularly for general populations than for special needs/struggling students. Tools created by research teams had greater effects than commercially-developed tools. Students with smaller sample sizes found greater effects than those with larger sample sizes. Posits the need for much more research to determine the value of these tools at the middle-school level employing a wider range of outcomes measures than simply standardized reading assessments that may serve as valid measures of the effects of these tools.


Discusses the results of a three-year survey study involving 98 English education preservice teachers that investigated their comfort or frustration with technology-based teaching practices as they progressed through their certification program. Results suggest that technology practices need to begin in methods classes in order for these practices to be used within field experience placements. Also, although preservice teachers experiment with technology, they expressed the need to be comfortable with technology before using them in classroom settings.


Survey of 2,905 UK adults and 2,068 UK parents and children finds widespread media use, with increases in mobile phone and Internet access in the bedroom and an average of six media devices in the bedroom for 12-15 year-olds. While youth of lower socioeconomic status have less home Internet access, they seek access outside the home. About half of young people conduct a check of website information; a relatively high percent express concerns about video game violence. Parents express more concern about online use than young people; about a third restrict television viewing, but less than half employ blocking software or controls on online access.


Surveys 367,000 students, teachers, parents, and administrators in all 50 states on their perceptions of uses of technology resources in schools. Students noted a “digital disconnect” between their home and school technology use with 40% indicating that they are limited in their use of technology by teachers and 45% indicating that firewalls and filters inhibit their learning. About one-half of students note that games can enhance their learning and one-third note that use of
games helps them learn to work collaboratively with peers. Only 11% of teachers are using an "educational computer game" in their teaching; about half of teachers expressed interest in more training in how to use games. Eight percent of students reported experience with school-based online classes; 33% of high school and 24% of middle school students indicated the desire to take online classes given the desire to work at their own pace or, for high school students, earn college credits; 33% of teachers report uses of online learning in their classrooms. One-third of teachers expressed an interest in online professional development. With 75% owning an MP3 player, two-thirds of high school students and half of middle-school students owning a cell phone, and a third of all students having laptop access, more than half indicated that they would use technology more readily if they could use their own MP3, cell phone, or laptop to complete work in school.


Analyzes video, field notes, and work of Los Angeles urban high school students' participation as "critical researchers" in a summer seminar involved in constructing and sharing knowledge related to social change and issues of power related to educational justice. Students engaged in extensive journal writing and production of PowerPoint presentations. Finds that students adopted a different stance towards engagement in academic work and texts, data collections, and valuing sharing of knowledge for wider audiences. Posits that the collaborative sharing of knowledge between students and facilitators as equals and the recruitment of expert audiences serves to motivate students to produce meaningful research valued by facilitators and expert audiences.


Examines the impact of a one-to-one middle school laptop program in Maine beginning in 2002 that provided all seventh- and eighth-grade students and their teachers with laptop computers. Finds that the average writing test score on the eighth-grade state writing test was significantly higher in 2005 compared to the 2000 score prior to implementation of the program. Students with the highest laptop use for writing had the highest scores. Suggests the value of students' laptop access in terms of improving their writing.


Analyzes a million words of unmonitored IMing generated by 71 adolescents. Finds that the language and syntax employed reflects linguistic changes in language use, as well as new hybrid mixes between speech and written language outside of school prescriptions, reflected in, for example, uses of abbreviations like *omg*, *lol*, and *ttyp*.


Examines literacy practices within ten schools in two states using one-to-one laptop programs. Benefits of using laptops during school included shifts in students' writing being more authentic and iterative, gains in technology literacy skills, and the increased presence of scaffolding and epistemic engagement in the teaching and learning of reading. Despite these benefits, the use of laptops neither improved students' reading or writing test scores nor minimized the achievement gap between students of differing socioeconomic statuses.

Analyzes British youth's uses of and attitudes toward issues of safety, privacy and cyberbullying on social networking, IMing, and video-sharing sites; also draws on related research. Finds that solo, unsupervised, nightly use of these sites to socialize raises new issues not evident to previous generations. While youth enjoy socializing, they express concern about the addictive nature of "constant connectivity." While they perceive the need to employ photos and private information to promote themselves, they respond negatively to strangers viewing this material. While they communicate with "friends of friends," they attempt to employ mechanisms to protect their safety. They often are not aware of consequences for risky, online behavior such as cyberbullying. Suggests the need for increased media literacy instruction and the corporate/computer industry's social responsibility towards youth audiences and uses of age-restriction mechanisms.


Describes a three-year mixed-method study about the use of threaded discussion groups in middle school classrooms. The researchers investigated the effects of threaded discussions on eighth graders' writing skills, their motivation to write, and their perceptions of themselves as writers. Findings include that students' perceptions of themselves as writers improved with boys' perceptions significantly improving. Study also documented students' increased knowledge of "new literacies," engagement, and authentic responses to literature.


Analyzes 12 adult Internet readers' uses of reading strategies involved in seeking specific information, acquiring general knowledge, and being entertained as measured through use of navigational records and recall protocols. Finds that the use of 50 identifiable strategies varied considerably by reading purpose, with some strategies employed either across purposes and others for only specific purposes. Suggests the need for instruction on helping readers identify their purposes and research to determine the benefit of such instruction.

Other related research:


Writing


Comparing the effects of providing a model paper in developing criteria and rubric self-assessing of first drafts versus developing criteria and reviewing first drafts on 116 third- and fourth-grade students' writing. Finds that the treatment had a positive effect on writing scores, as did previous writing achievement. Suggests the value of using a model for developing criteria and a self-assessment rubric.


Examines the effects of a writing workshop on synthesis writing from multiple sources. During the workshop, undergraduate students practiced synthesis writing, received teacher feedback, and analyzed and discussed examples of academic writing. At pretest and posttest, students wrote syntheses and filled in a questionnaire. Finds that students' writing improved, but that beliefs about the nature of academic writing did not change.

Examines how children’s narrative writing can be improved by drawing attention to the literary devices used by professional writers or mentor texts. Over one year, 18 teachers of nine elementary schools explored ways of developing children as reflective authors. Group discussions and teacher-child talk were videotaped, and samples of children’s writing were collected and analyzed. Suggests that reading, discussing, and evaluating mentor texts can have a positive impact on the quality of children’s independent writing.


Compares fifth and eighth graders’ first and final drafts on a state writing assessment using the state scored rubric. Finds that over half of first drafts scored as well if not better than final drafts for general students; there were no significant differences between first and final drafts for special education and “general education” eighth graders. Raises questions about the use of revisions of draft in writing assessments.


Examines the use of a campus-based writing assessment designed to determine undergraduates’ writing ability using two timed and two conventions essays written before, during, and at the end of their enrollment in a writing program at a state university. Analyzes these essays on critical thinking, genre knowledge, rhetorical skills, and mechanics, yielding results similar to those at comparable universities. Finds significant differences between the students’ instructors’ institutional position and students’ enrollment status. Suggests the value of using such assessments to inform composition program policies and writing within the university.


Studies urban first graders’ multimodal writing practices within unofficial worlds as distinct from official print-based school notions of writing. Highlights work of three children within official or hybrid (convergence of official and unofficial) literacy events in terms of materiality, voice, and multimodality. Finds extensive links to unofficial worlds as part of negotiating with official school worlds, but difficulties in integrating the unofficial into standardized literacy instruction of the official world that marginalize materiality, voice, and multimodality.


Investigates the conceptions of writing, writing approaches, and the quality of learning of 121 college students who were expected to write a scientific report as part of an undergraduate biology course. Finds that prior cohesive conceptions of writing, a deep approach to writing, and positive perceptions of the learning context are positively related to higher levels of achievement in writing and a higher quality of the learning experience.


Investigates the influence of students’ reflexive style on the improvement of their writing. Participants were 100 students (fifth and sixth grade) with learning disabilities (LD). One group received special training in writing and reflexivity during three months; another group received ordinary instruction. Finds that the training in writing and reflexivity improved the writing quality and reflexive style of LD students with a low reflexivity level. Suggests that students’ reflexivity level has an impact on the quality of their writing.

Investigates the structural relationship between children's writing achievement and their attitude towards writing. Three models were tested: (a) writing attitude influences writing achievement; (b) writing achievement influences writing attitude; (c) writing attitude influences writing achievement and vice versa. The models were tested with a sample of 241 young, beginning writers (first and third grade). The students wrote compositions and filled in an attitude questionnaire. Finds that the first model provides the best description of the data. Thus, students who were more positive about writing had higher writing achievement.


Aims at identifying effective writing treatments for adolescents in grades 4-12. Analyzes 123 experimental and quasi-experimental studies on writing. Finds large average effect sizes for strategy instruction, summarization, peer assistance, and setting product goals. Other effective practices included word processing, sentence combining, inquiry, prewriting activities, process writing approach, and study of models. Recommends to explicitly and systematically teach the processes and strategies involved in writing, including planning, sentence construction, summarizing, and revising.


Examines the potential barriers to engaging with writing that students of two secondary school English classes reported. Focus groups were formed based on students' level of engagement with writing tasks, and 50-minute discussions were held with groups of engaged and reluctant writers. Finds that interest in a topic, or the perceived relevance of the writing task, was the main factor that students attribute to writing engagement. Reluctant writers made more comments about the importance of teacher support, whereas engaged writers made more statements about the importance of having choice or control.


Examines whether students would benefit more from writing instruction when this instruction is adapted to their habitual writing strategy. One hundred thirteen tenth-grade students were randomly assigned to two conditions: writing instruction based on a planning strategy and writing instruction based on a revising strategy. Students' preference for either a planning or revising strategy was assessed beforehand by way of a questionnaire. Finds that students with a strong tendency to plan or revise profited more from writing instruction based on a planning strategy. Students with a low tendency to plan or revise benefited more from instruction based on a revising strategy.


Analyzes the predictive validity of the revised SAT that includes a writing sample as of 2005. Finds that the changes in the test did not change the ability of the test to predict first-year college performance for over 150,000 students from 110 colleges. Of the three SAT sections, the writing section is the most predictive of college performance. For students in public/less selec-
tive colleges, grades are slightly better predictors of success, while SAT scores are slightly better predictors for private/more selective colleges. Suggests the value of using an admissions test that includes a writing sample.


Presents a writing task and scoring system to measure students' informative writing. The task requires students to identify a real-world problem, and then to demonstrate the relevance of mathematics, science, and social studies in solving the problem. The compositions written by 72 students (fifth and sixth grade) were scored by two independent raters. Finds support for the reliability and validity of the scores.


Examines student perspectives about writing by interviewing both developing and struggling writers in grades 2-8. Finds a progressive developmental pattern of writing knowledge in which novice writers place more emphasis on the physical product and local meaning, while more experienced writers focus on global aspects, such as meaning and communication with an audience. In comparison, struggling writers focus on product over process even at the secondary level. Suggests careful attention to the developmental level of the students during writing instruction.


Compares anonymous versus identifiable e-peer feedback in four first-year composition classes. Finds that anonymous feedback results in more critical feedback and superior writing performance than the use of identifiable feedback.


Compares types of errors in papers written in 2006 by a national random stratified sample of first-year college students with results of a similar 1986 study analyzing types of errors in 3,000 papers (Connors & Lunsford, 1988), as well as error rates identified in 1917 and 1930 studies. Thirty trained coders analyzed 1,826 essays for 40 possible errors. Finds that the 2006 papers averaged 1,038 words, two-and-a-half times longer than papers written in 1986. The 2006 papers were more likely to be argument and research essays, while the 1986 papers were more likely to be personal narratives. Teachers marked 38% of the errors identified by coders in the 2006 papers, a decline from 43% of errors marked by teachers in 1986. Teachers marked errors in the 2006 papers largely by hand, with little use of technology tools. Identifies the 20 most frequently employed errors; the top 10 include: use of the "wrong word," missing comma with introductory element, incomplete/missing documentation, vague pronoun reference, spelling errors (the latter often due to spell-checker suggestions), mechanical errors with a quotation, unnecessary comma, capitalization, missing word, faulty sentence structure. Seven errors from 1986 papers were not found in the 2006 most frequent 20 errors: wrong/misplaced preposition, pronoun shifts, tense/verb form, subject-verb agreement, missing comma in a series, and dangling modifiers. Finds little using of IM-ing lingo or uses of multimodal digital material in the 2006 papers. Concludes that error rates have remained relatively stable compared to previous studies, with some shifts in the types of errors.

Explores the process of planning while writing an academic essay in L2 (Spanish) and L1 (English). Analyzes verbal protocols for the time spent on planning, and examines whether planning time differs depending on the writers' level of proficiency in L2, the language of composition (L1 or L2), the phase of the composition in which the planning behavior occurred. Finds that the writer's level of proficiency influenced the amount devoted to planning, regardless of the language of composition.


Investigates the effects of providing content goals and audience awareness goals during revising on the persuasiveness of students' writing. Fifth- and eighth-grade students were randomly assigned to three conditions: a general goal, a content goal, and an audience goal group. Finds that students in both the content and audience goal groups outperformed the students in the general goal group. Students who received audience awareness goals were more likely to consider opposing perspectives.


Examines the spelling and handwriting speed of several cohorts of English students (age 11-12) who had completed primary school and followed the National Literacy Strategy. Students were asked to write on a subject of interest for 20 minutes. Finds that one-third of the students made many more than five spelling errors per 100 words. Over 95% could not meet the handwriting speed criterion of 25 words per minute. Suggests that the National Literacy Strategy has had little impact upon improving writing speed or spelling accuracy.


Investigates the understandings of 14- and 16-year-old students of the revisions they make during writing. Students were observed writing in a classroom setting and then interviewed about their writing processes. Finds that students tend to view revision as a post-textual production reviewing activity. Although all students engaged in online revision of some kind, it is not clear that the students think of this as revision. Suggests that common pedagogical practices have an influence on shaping students' perspectives on the writing process, and revision in particular.


Analyzes written narratives of 277 students across grade levels one through five. Finds gender differences for productivity measures in favour of females. Shows no differences when comparing stories written by African American and Caucasian students. Indicates implications for instruction and for documenting change in the story-writing performance of students with and without special needs in the area of written language development.


Examines student characteristics and instructional variables that may predict the quality of 120 third-grade students' narrative writing. Finds that gender, compositional fluency, IQ, word reading ability, and grammatical understanding are significant predictors of the compositional quality.
No main effects of instructional variables were found. Concludes that student characteristics are important in writing achievement.


Reports on the developmental and psychometric properties of an early writing task. Participants were 40 L1 English-speaking children in Toronto who were followed for four years. The early writing task required children to write words and number and word combinations. Shows characteristic features of children's early writing of number and word combinations at each of the four grade levels and shows that performance on the writing task in Kindergarten predicted reading skills at the end of grade 1. Provides educators with a reliable measure of invented spelling that taps into alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness.


Examines the temporal dimension of the composing process in L2 writing. Participants were Spanish students with various levels of L2 (English) proficiency, who thought aloud while performing an argumentative writing task. Three stages of the composing process were distinguished (initial, medial, and final stages). Finds that formulation was the dominant process across writers and proficiency levels. More time was devoted to planning, evaluation, and revision as proficiency increased. Also finds that L2 proficiency was related to a more balanced allocation of processing time to different composing activities.


Analyzes the social contracts which 18 two-year-olds and their teachers negotiated over a nine-month period in a preschool writing center. Finds that social contracts were related to the physical properties of texts, the representational systems of art and writing, and relations between people and text objects. Suggests that children's knowledge about writing is collectively constructed, and linked to local writing practices.


Examines the effect of Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRRSD) on the quality of stories written by six second-grade students with learning disabilities. Students practised strategies for planning and writing stories, and then revised their stories after instructor modelling of revising. Finds that students' stories at post-instruction were longer, more complete, and qualitatively better.


Examines whether skilled writers are more knowledgeable than less skilled writers, and whether individual differences in knowledge are related to writing performance. Finds that fourth-grade skilled writers were more knowledgeable than their less skilled peers. They knew more about how writing promoted school and later occupational success, and about the role of processes in composing, the use of procedures when writing for a younger child, and the value of seeking assistance when experiencing difficulties. Also shows that for more skilled writers, writing knowledge was significantly correlated with their story writing performance.

Investigates the writing skills of more than 165,000 eighth- and twelfth-grade students in the United States. Each student performed two out of 20 possible narrative, informative, or persuasive writing tasks. Compares the results to results from previous years. Finds that the average writing scores of eighth and twelfth graders were higher in 2007 than in previous assessments in 2002 and 1998.


Reviews reading and writing research in which modelling was used to enhance students' self-efficacy, skills, and self-regulation across multiple phases of Zimmerman's social cognitive model of self-regulatory competence. Suggests instructional applications based on social cognitive theory and research findings.


Describes ways in which peer collaboration may foster children's classroom-based creative writing. Participants were 24 children, aged 7-9, working in pairs. Pairs' collaborative creative writing sessions were observed, recorded, and analyzed. Finds that emotions (playfulness, musing, acting out, humour, singing) play a central role in the observed creative writing sessions.


Examines three aspects in the development of literacy: students' interpretation of fragments of writing, the connection they establish between letters and numbers, and their knowledge of letters. Finds that children with intellectual disabilities develop, in many aspects, similarly to the children without intellectual disabilities during emergent literacy. Nevertheless, they are less consistent in the use of writing classifying criteria, as well as in their discriminating letters from numbers. Shows that, although the level of intellectual disability influenced the children's progress greatly, the acquisition of the knowledge of letters differed mostly in accordance to the level of stimulation to reading.


Analyzes three high school males' construction of masks as a reflection of their identities to determine their uses of material and composition tools as part of instruction on relationships between written and artistic composing. Uses field notes and think-aloud protocol to analyze use of goals, mask quality, and identity construction. Finds parallels in students' writing and mask construction in terms of meaning-making related to design decisions, student engagement related to students' social interests, and uses of multimodal intertextual connections.

Other related research:


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**2009 David H. Russell Award Call for Nominations**

The National Council of Teachers of English is now accepting nominations for the David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English. This award recognizes published research in language, literature, rhetoric, teaching procedures, or cognitive processes that may sharpen the teaching or the content of English at any level. Any work or works of scholarship or research in language, literature, rhetoric, or pedagogy and learning published during the past five years (i.e., between January 2004 and December 2008) are eligible. Works nominated for the David H. Russell Award should be exemplary instances of the genre, address broad research questions, contain material that is accessibly reported, and reflect a project that stands the test of time. Normally, anthologies are not considered. Reports of doctoral studies, while not precluded from consideration for the Russell Award, are typically considered as part of NCTE’s separate “Promising Researcher” program. Works nominated for the award must be available in the English language.

To nominate a study for consideration, please email the following information to college@ncte.org: your name, phone number, email address, author, title, publisher, date of publication, and one paragraph indicating your reasons for nominating the work. Nominations must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2009. Please include four copies of the publication for distribution to the Selection Committee, or give full bibliographic information so that the Selection Committee will encounter no difficulty in locating the publication you nominate. Send nominations and materials to: David H. Russell Award, NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096; Attn: Felisa Mann. Final selections will be announced in mid-August 2009.