

The Language of Writing: Creating a Writing Program that Fosters Communication, Collaboration, and Composition

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A Quick Survey of Your Students' Writing Programs

Think of a child or two with whom you work. Quickly write down what their writing program currently involves (across settings):

Possible Examples: Drawing, Center, Journal, Handwriting Without Tears®, Sentence completion, content area (i.e., science, social studies) assignments

How are these activities distributed across a week? In the weekly overview below, list the writing activity and time allotment for each day.

Example:

Monday
Center - 15 minutes

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

What are your instructional or learning goals (letter formation? message construction? conventions of print? etc.). As you lay out your goals below, think about how they connect with the time/instruction allocated above in the students' writing programs.

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Planning for Composition

Questions to Consider:

- ❖ In thinking about your students' class schedules, how often should you include writing – several times per week? Daily?
- ❖ To foster meaningful engagement during composition, what connections can you make to your children's previous life experiences (both in school and outside of school) and how might you extend their experiences?
- ❖ As the composition process is both an opportunity for expression of ideas and a context for social engagement, how might you facilitate both these dynamics?

Facilitating Composition - things to consider when facilitating expression and engagement

- Reframe thinking about writing – writing suggests product. Think composition and acknowledge and support the process leading to the product.
- Be mindful of cognitive processes (the student's thinking) and social aspect of readers and writers around the text to improve quality of text
- Cognitive demands – writing is a cognitive process. How do we facilitate/support without interrupting flow?
- Interactions throughout the writing process and written products provide an opportunity to assess/monitor language and composition skills.
- Use assessment to prioritize instructional efforts
- Honoring the author – presume they have thoughts, experiences, and ideas to draw from in their writing.
- Authors with CCN need opportunities to learn to use a comprehensive communication system within and outside the writing process

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Assessing Composition Over Time

- Anecdotal notes
 - Concepts about print
 - Letter formation
 - Concept of word
 - Message
 - Variety
 - Language use
 - Writing process –
 - Engagement
 - Sense of story
 - Motoric (what they are able to represent) physical conventional versus ideational and representational
- Digital photos throughout a session (not just looking at end product)
- End product (actual writing sample, photos)

Possible Methods for documenting –

- sticky notes or sticky labels (for anecdotal record documentation)
- video, digital
- hard copies

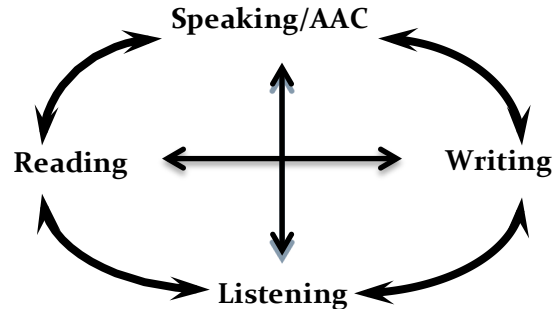
Suggestion for Taking Anecdotal Notes (ways you could document child’s actions):

Date	Child’s Actions <small>(can use sticky notes or labels)</small>	Meaning of Actions <small>(during or post lesson)</small>
11/7/13	Writing from left to right using short straight lines in a row, interspersed with squiggles and circles. <i>[hardcopy of writing sample]</i>	Left to right orientation of text
12/16/13	Writing from L-R, using some letter like shapes – with spaces between some sets of letters. <i>[digital photo of writing sample]</i>	L-R orientation of text Concept of word
	When read aloud, pointed to sets of letters for each word stated. <i>[video of child reading own writing]</i>	Concept of word Spoken words are represented by print
1/23/14	Shares idea of drawing (dragon with fire) with K and S. Talks about how the dragon will burn up all the trees. Continues discussing/sharing story of dragon while elaborating the drawing –listens to others’ comments, answers their questions about his drawing <i>[digital photos of drawing and interactions]</i>	Planning Conversation -multiple exchanges Collaboration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering questions • Listening • Taking turns

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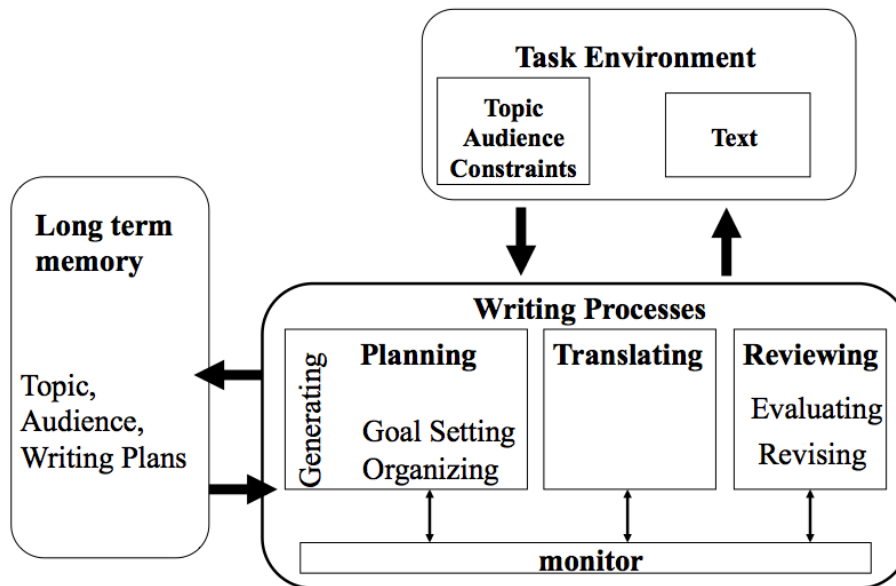
A Concurrent View of Literacy and Language

(Koppenhaver, Coleman, Kalman, & Yoder, 1991 as adapted from Teale & Sulzby, 1989)



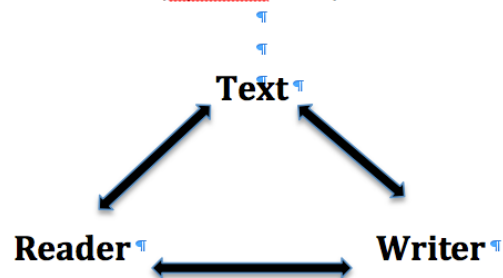
Writing as a Process

(Flower & Hayes, 1981)



Social Interactive Process of Writing

(Nystrand, 1986)



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