



Early Writing as a Collaborative, Language-Based Activity

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Why Early Literacy and Why Early Writing?




What we already know...

- Early reading and writing skills are strong predictors of later literacy skills
- Literacy strong predictor of school success (NELP, 2008)
- Children with difficulty early on almost never catch up to peers (Juel, 1988)
- At-risk for special education services (Lentz, 1988)




Writing Statistics

- National Center for Educational Statistics (2002):
- 28% of US 4th grade students...
- 31% of US 8th grade students...
- Scored at a proficient level in writing on National Assessment of Educational Progress



Therefore....

- Not only should approaches be developed to support early reading, BUT....
- Also need approaches to support early writing
- Do we have these? What are they?
- How do teachers at your school address writing with preschoolers/kindergartners?
- Do you ever address writing with young children?



WHY ME?!

(insert photos of before pictures)

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My Perspective...

- What I saw Head Start teachers attempting
- What I saw that children might be able to do
- Why I thought it related to me:
 - My kids struggled the most
 - More than a motor activity
 - Language potential

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Oral Language and Literacy Connection

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Oral Language and Literacy

Connections between spoken and written language:

- (a) spoken language provides foundation for reading and writing
- (b) spoken and written language have a reciprocal relationship
- (c) children with spoken language problems frequently have difficulty learning to read and write, and children with reading and writing problems frequently have difficulty with spoken language
- (d) instruction in spoken language can result in growth in written language, and instruction in written language can result in growth in spoken language

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2001). *Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists With Respect to Reading and Writing in Children and Adolescents* [Guidelines]. Available from www.asha.org/policy.

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Why Early Writing?

Cabel, Justice, Zucker and McGinty (2009):

- Looked at 59 preschool children with LI and concluded that these children lagged significantly behind typical language children in their name writing abilities
- 65.2% of children with TL able to write all letters in name
- 47.8% of those with LI were unable to produce one recognizable letter
- Name writing abilities associated with skills in alphabet knowledge and print concepts

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Contributions of Early Writing to Other Areas of Language and Literacy: It's More Than Just a Fine Motor Activity

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Early Writing Research and Outcomes

- Bloodgood (1999)
- Early name writing in preschoolers
- Year long study
- Ability to produce name correlated with alphabet knowledge, sight word recognition, and word tracking
- Concluded name writing has instructional potential to help children connect literacy strands

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Early Writing Research

- Aram and Biron (2004)
- Contrasted two emergent literacy programs (1: shared reading, 2: writing activities)
- Concluded joint writing significantly outperformed joint reading on phonological awareness, word writing, print awareness and letter knowledge
- also indicated no significant differences between groups in other areas, as both increased vocabulary, general knowledge, and listening comprehension

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Early Writing Research....

- Diamond, Gerde and Powell (2008)
- Explored writing skills of Head Start children throughout one school year
- Concluded children who demonstrated more sophisticated writing knew names of more letters, understood more about print concepts, more sensitive to initial sounds of words

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Early Writing Research

- Craig (2006)
 - 16 week study
 - Investigated effects of 2 instructional approaches on the phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge and early reading of kindergarten children
 - Compared form of contextualized instruction based on an adapted interactive writing program with a field-tested program of metalinguistic games
 - No group differences with phonological awareness and spelling
 - Significant differences between groups on word identification, passage comprehension, and word reading development measures

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Collaboration and the Classroom

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Why Collaborate?

- ASHA (1991). *A Model for Collaborative Service Delivery for Students With Language-Learning Disorders in the Public Schools*. Available from www.asha.org/policy.
- Need to know what's going on in classroom
- Need to know HOW child is doing in the classroom
- Child doesn't miss out on classroom instruction and socialization
- RTI
- Prevention

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What does classroom-based therapy look like?

- Group time
- Center time
- Shared book reading
- Others?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the challenges?



Teaching Early Literacy Skills

Explicit Skills in Authentic Contexts



Early Literacy Foundations

- Phonological Awareness
- Alphabet Knowledge
- Print Concepts
- Emergent Writing
- Foundations for Reading Comprehension
- Vocabulary Development
- Narrative Production




Authentic Contexts for Early Language/Literacy

- Also referred to as “Embedded Approaches” (Kaderavek & Justice, 2004)
- Emphasis on naturalistic environment
- Contextualized
- Activities often initiated by the child
- Adult-mediation and scaffolding
- Meaningful experiences for children to experience literacy




Rationale for an Authentic Approach to Literacy

- Authentic environment essential for teaching language development to support natural communication
- Language is not a set of isolated skills that are learned out of context, it is learned through the need and desire to communicate as a social being (Ukrainitz, 2006).
- Literacy is an extension of language and providing an environment for exploring these literacy experiences in a meaningful way is essential.




Authentic Contexts

- Adult-Child Shared Bookreading
 - Interactive, interesting, meaningful
 - Facilitates literacy learning in child through oral and written language
- Includes:
 - Asking open-ended questions
 - Expanding and extending child utterances
 - Promotes adult-child conversations
 - Developing prediction skills, text-to-life, etc




Authentic Contexts

- Literacy-Enriched Play
 - Dramatic play
 - Using literacy tools and artifacts (magazine, menu, message pad for phone, shopping list, etc)
 - Adult mediation with props
 - (Neuman and Roskos, 1992)




Explicit Instruction

- Structured, sequenced instruction for acquisition of discrete skills
- Decontextualized
- Less naturalistic
- Goal to develop metalinguistic skills
- Teacher/SLP taking lead role



Rationale for Explicit Instruction

- Literacy not exclusively a natural process
- Research has shown that it requires some explicit instruction
- For example: phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print conventions, reading comprehension strategies and writing conventions
- Research has indicated that these discrete skills are crucial, especially when working with children with already identified language difficulties. (Justice and Kaderavek, 2004).




Explicit Instruction

- Phonological Awareness
- Print Concepts
- Alphabet Knowledge
- Writing mechanics
- Vocabulary




Merging the Two Approaches

- Neither of these frameworks for early literacy development can survive on their own
- Both essential for the development of a well rounded early literacy approach ("balanced literacy")
- Early literacy instruction should include both the teaching of explicit skills within the context of authentic language and literacy experiences.



Writing Activities

- What's authentic about it? • (add photo)
- What could be explicit about it?



What Does Early Writing Look Like?

- Mechanics Versus Composition
- Drawing as composing
- Active versus passive literacy learning
- Writer's workshop in older grades

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Mechanics vs Composition

- Most early writing instruction traditionally begins with tracing and copying letters and words, as many teachers believe this is the first skill to be “mastered” before moving to conventional writing (Dyson, 1985; Sulzby, 1992).
- Research on early writing similarly focuses on name writing, transcription skills and the ability to form letters (Bloodgood, 1999; Edwards, 2003; Graham & Harris, 2000).

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Examples

(insert photos of examples of traditional early writing activities)

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Mechanics vs Composition

- Berninger et al (2002):
- writing is comprised of the combination of skills related to transcription, executive functions and text generating.

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Mechanics vs Composition

- Rowe (2008) emergent writing is more than just the marks that a child makes on the page (decoding), it also includes the meanings that the child gives to these marks (oral language), as well as the social context in which the writing occurs (meaningful contexts).

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Mechanics vs Composition

- Three factors that stand out as being key to early reading and writing success:
- 1.) oral language (vocabulary, comprehension, narration)
- 2.) foundational skills for later decoding (alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, name writing)
- 3.) high-quality, meaningful contexts that promote literacy learning
- (van Kleeck and Schuele, 2010)


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Patterns of Early Writing Development (Sulzby et al, 1989)

- Drawing: Only if not distinguishable from writing by the child.
- Scribble-wavy
- Scribble-letter-like
- Letter-like units
- Letters-Random
- Letters-Patterns
- Letters-Name Elements
- Copying
- Invented spelling-Syllabic
- Invented spelling-Intermediate
- Invented spelling-Full (phoneme by phoneme)
- Conventional




Examples:




Drawing as Composition

- Drawing as beginning stages of early writing
- Drawing as beginning stages of written storytelling
- Drawing to supplement limited writing ability in early ages



Examples




Writing with Older Children

- Writer's Workshop
- Writing Workshop
- Writing Lab
- Process-Based Writing
- Lucy Calkins
- Nancy Atwell
- Donald Graves
- 80s and 90s




Video of Writers Workshop




Calkin's Writing Workshop

- Rehearsal
- Drafting
- Revising
- Editing
- Mini Lessons
- Conferring
- Peer Conferring
- Share Sessions
- Publication Celebration




Partnerships in Writing Lab

- Nelson and van Meter (2006)
- Gaining access into classrooms
- Establishing a routine through collaborative planning
- Creating opportunities to address individualized goals




Early Beginnings....

- *Already Ready*, Katie Wood Ray and Matt Glover
- *Engaging Young Writers, Preschool-First Grade*, Matt Glover
- *About the Authors: Writing Workshop with Our Youngest Writers*, Katie Wood Ray
- *Talking, Drawing, Writing: Lessons for Our Youngest Writers*, Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe




An Example of Young Authors

- Insert video clip



This is what I thought I could accomplish....

- A context that could work on language and literacy in a large group, classroom activity
- A context to address individual needs in a large group setting
- A context to encourage teacher/SLP collaboration
- An activity that the teacher was comfortable engaging children in
- An activity in which the teacher could address a variety of language and literacy skills development




Writing Activities

- ✓ Phonological Awareness
 - Help beginning writers with identifying initial sounds in words (to put in print)
- ✓ Alphabet Knowledge
 - Identifying letters in their names
 - Referring to alphabet chart to write letters




Video

- Insert example here




Writing Activities

- ✓ Print Concepts/Referencing
 - ✓ Referencing text in books
 - ✓ Referencing classroom print
 - ✓ (to write words/vocabulary in their books)




Example




Writing Activities

- ✓ Reading Comprehension/Listening Comprehension
 - ✓ Elements of story grammar (what is the setting of your story? Who are the characters?)
- ✓ Language Development
 - ✓ Opportunity for asking open-ended questions, expanding/extending etc




Example




Writing Activities

- ✓ Narrative Development
 - What's happening in your story?
 - Tell me what your story is about?
 - Opportunity to help with sequencing story (beginning, ending, what happened next, etc)




Example




How I Did It

- Teacher training
- Collaboration model
- Ongoing problem solving/collaboration




Pilot Study

- **Setting:** Four preschool classrooms in an inner-city Head Start
- **Participants:** Four lead teachers and 8-12 children ages 3-5 in their classrooms (two teachers in experimental group/two teachers in control group)




Pilot Study

- **Data Collected:**
- **Teacher Outcomes:** Pre- and Post-Observation checklist from 10 minutes of classroom observation of writing instruction (see table 1 and 2)
- **Child Outcomes:** Pre- and Post-test measures on
- 1.) Name Writing using classroom sign it sheet coded using Lieberman Scale (1985)
- 2.) Story Retell through writing/drawing activity coded using 12-Point Emergent Writing Scale developed by Sulzby, Barnhart, & Hieshima (1989)



Pilot Study


- **Intervention:** A six-week classroom collaboration in which the SLP and classroom teacher worked collectively (twice a week/30-60 minutes each session) to mediate and scaffold with children to target language, pre-literacy and early writing skills.



Pilot Study

Language-Based Writing Intervention:
Creating short storybooks with the teacher/SLP assisting the children for:

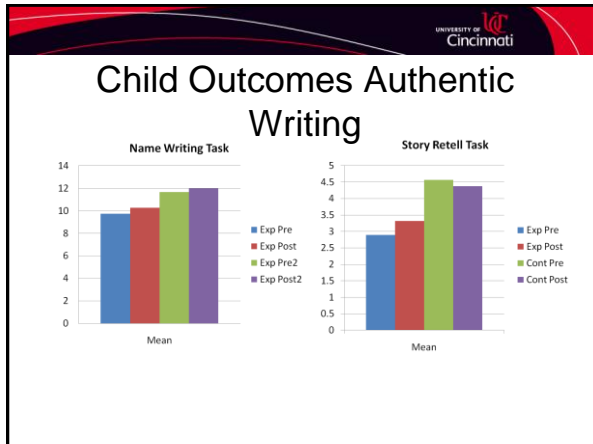
- 1.) topic generation,
- 2.) drawing pictures to communicate their story, and
- 3.) attempting to write a message to go along with the story at the children's appropriate level of development.



Pilot Study

Research Questions:

- 1.) Will teachers increase their use of writing instruction skills through a professional development project that includes information on a language-based approach to early writing using a model of collaboration?
- 2.) Will the classroom teachers increase their use of language enhancement strategies while engaging the children in their classroom with language-based writing instruction?
- 3.) Will children participating in language-based writing activities exhibit increased emergent writing skills in comparison to children participating in activities that focus on the mechanics of writing?



Teacher Outcomes Authentic Writing

	Written Model	Verbal Model	Reference to Class Point	Reference to Book Content	Reference to Phonological Awareness Strategy	Talk about Alphabet Letters	Reference to Writing Conventions	Questions about Child's Intention	Interpret. of Child's Intention
Teacher1 Exp Pre	0	0	3	2	0	15	0	1	0
Teacher1 Exp Post	0	0	9	5	0	13	1	10	2
Teacher2 Exp Pre	1	1	4	0	0	8	1	0	0
Teacher2 Exp Post	0	0	5	0	11	18	6	45	1
Teacher3 Cont Pre	3	0	0	0	0	15	7	1	1
Teacher3 Cont Post	2	0	5	0	0	23	5	0	0
Teacher4 Cont Pre	1	0	3	0	2	3	0	0	0
Teacher4 Cont Post	0	0	0	0	0	19	4	0	0

Teacher Writing Outcomes Authentic Writing

	Managerial Question	Managerial Directive Comment	Closed-Ended Question	Open-Ended Question	Expansion/Extension Comment	Face-to-face or side-by-side interaction	Praise	Unsolicited Offer to Help	Response to request for help
Teacher1 Exp Pre	7	30	14	1	1	3	0	1	2
Teacher1 Exp Post	5	58	20	8	0	8	2	6	5
Teacher2 Exp Pre	6	41	8	0	3	4	10	7	16
Teacher2 Exp Post	8	7	39	24	11	25	7	12	18
Teacher3 Cont Pre	7	58	6	0	0	17	11	3	7
Teacher3 Cont Post	0	42	14	1	0	16	4	5	11
Teacher4 Exp Pre	4	19	8	0	0	1	3	1	2
Teacher4 Cont Post	6	41	19	0	0	15	3	13	2

- ### Follow-Up Study
- 6 month study in one classroom with one teacher and 15 preschool students
 - 2x/month videotaped 45 minute sessions of language-based writing activity
 - Audio recorded teacher-child interactions, including child telling teacher his/her story
 - Audio recorded child telling his/her story one on one with researcher
 - Video recording children telling story to class

Research Questions

- 1.) Do the children participating in a Language-Based approach to early writing increase their early literacy skills, in the form of written language, as measured by a 12-point Emergent Writing Scale (Sulzby, Barnhart, & Hieshima, 1989)?
- 2.) Do the participating children increase their oral language skills as measured by language analysis and narrative development of the stories they create and tell?

Research Questions

- 3.) Is the classroom teacher able to use a variety of early literacy strategies and oral language strategies in each documented session within the context of the language-based writing approach and what are the primary contexts for the teacher-child interactions?
- 4.) Does the context of the teacher-child interaction have specific influence on the child outcomes of writing or oral language?

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Measures

- Children's writing development: 12-point scale developed by Sulzby, Barnhart & Hieshima (1989)
- Children's narrative development: story grammar elements, t-units and cohesion using the Fictional Story Data Sheet (Hughes, McGillivray, and Schmidek, 1997)
- Oral language development: t-units (measure of sentence complexity), Mean Length of Utterance (measure of linguistic productivity), Type Token Ratio (measure of vocabulary variation) and total number of words by using SALT software (Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts)

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Measures

- Analysis of the teacher's use of targeted strategies
- Recordings will be transcribed, coded and counted by using a checklist to determine the number of prompts the teacher used for targeting early reading and writing skills (i.e., phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, writing conventions) and oral language skills (i.e., asking open ended questions, expanding on child utterances)

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Outcomes....

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