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by Flora Debora

Bridging the Reading-Writing Gap in Second Language Learning

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"If reading and writing really were identical and not just similar, then...everything learned in one would automatically transfer to the other"
(Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000, p. 43).

Abstract

Research shows that reading and writing are closely connected. Students who can read well can be expected to write well. However, repeated observations show that this is not always the case. Students who have developed an advanced reading ability often continue to experience difficulty when they try to express themselves in writing. This chapter first discusses oft-cited sources of students' writing difficulties, which typically involve difficulties at the linguistic (e.g., vocabulary, grammar and text structure) and cognitive levels (e.g., selecting relevant contents, connecting different parts of the writing). The next part of the chapter explores the relationship between reading and writing in detail, highlighting areas that need to be linked more tightly together. The last section presents an instructional model that promotes more efficient input processing and focused noticing of linguistic features found in the target text. The model also encourages student writers to engage in writerly reading and readerly writing to further strengthen their writing proficiency.

Keywords: reading and writing connection, L2 reading, L2 writing, ELT

To beginning second or foreign language learners, all four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing can be equally demanding. This is not surprising as beginning language learners have to acquire a completely new linguistic system that is often vastly different from their native language. Consider, for example, a Thai student learning English as a foreign language. The Thai writing system is completely different from English so Thai students need to learn a whole new set of the English writing system. Thai is a syllable-timed language, i.e., each

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