

## THE READING WRITING CONNECTION

In one of our undergrad classes we were recently discussing the notion of literacy and reading and writing. The question thrown to the class was: What do you think about the idea OF developing reading and writing together.

There were some very interesting responses. One Grade Three teacher said:

I believe that literacy requires that children learn to read and write at the same time. When children are asked to write about things that are related to the topics they read in books, they approach the task with much more confidence and enthusiasm than when they are just given topics to write about. For example, my class recently read *The True Story of The Three Little Pigs*; when asked to write how they felt about the original story now that they had read another side of it, their responses were not only emotional but also rational as they sought to defend the position they had taken. One boy even went beyond the story to make a comparison with the *Fox and The Crow*. That was the start of a journey with my students as each began to explore other stories to which there could be other sides. Reading served as a catalyst for writing and then writing served as a catalyst for further reading.

So you see, it just depends on how it is done. Reading and writing go hand in hand. Children read and they want to write about what they read; when they write they read what they write and they want to read more so that they can write about it. In that way reading and writing do not only become meaningful; they are also fun activities.

A Grade Two Teacher said in response to the question and possibly in response to the Grade Three Teacher:

Yes, I do believe that both reading and writing are equally important skills for children to develop and we have read several books and been to several workshops in which these two skills have been the focus time and time again. However, the big question for one is really, what is writing?" When I have a class of over fifty (50) students in a room in which there is absolutely no space to manoeuvre and in which the children do little or no reading, how do I get them to write and then to read what they write?

Furthermore, what I get from some of these children cannot be called writing. First of all, I can hardly make out the "crab toe" that they hand in and second they do not even know what is a proper sentence. And do not forget that at the end of the year both the principal and the parents are expecting you to work a miracle.

I think that along with the class teacher there should be seminars for principals and parents so that they could also learn about emergent literacy the writing process and those things. Reading and writing, yes, but it doesn't work like that for everybody.

What are the issues here?

## **READING AND WRITING: RATIONALE**

- Reading and writing are complementary processes.
- Reading and writing are constructive processes.
- Reading and writing share similar processes and kinds of knowledge.
- When taught together, reading and writing improve children's achievement.
- Reading and writing together serve to foster and enhance communication.
- When combined reading and writing help to develop critical thinking.

## **DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S WRITING**

- Domains (McHugh, 1987): four domains
  - sensory/descriptive
  - imaginative/narrative
  - practical/informative
  - analytical expository
- Modes : Five Modes
  - independent writing
  - collaborative writing
  - guided writing
  - shared writing
  - write aloud
- Traits : Six Traits
  - Ideas

- organization
- voice
- word choice
- sentence fluency
- conventions
- Process : Five steps (Calkins, 1994; Graves 1983, 1991, Hillocks 1987)
  - selecting the topic (planning or previewing)
  - drafting (composing)
  - revising
  - proofreading (editing)
  - publishing

## **CONNECTING READING AND WRITING: SOME ACTIVITIES**

- Story Frames / Story Grammar
- Summaries
- [Readers' Theatre](#)
- Borrowed Stories