

Early childhood programs which improving writing skills

Toshniyozova Sevinch

a first-year student

sevinchsherzodovna8@gmail.com

A scientific advisor

Salikhova Nasiba

USWLU

nasibasalikh@gmail.com

Abstract. This article examines the role of early writing in the development of children’s reading abilities, arguing that writing should precede and support reading instruction in early childhood education. It contends that young learners are active constructors of linguistic knowledge rather than passive recipients, and that introducing writing first helps them understand the sound–symbol relationship fundamental to decoding text. Early writing enables children to “crack the reading code” by linking letters with sounds, thereby improving both decoding and comprehension.

The paper outlines several benefits of early writing instruction. First, children often read the words they initially write, making literacy learning more personal and meaningful. Second, writing fosters cognitive development by introducing composition, storytelling, purpose, audience awareness, and organizational techniques. Third, it serves as an effective assessment tool, allowing teachers to monitor reading development through students’ written output.

Key words: preschool, Classroom environment, conceptual, assessment, technique, knowledge, developmental, evaluate, framework.

Introduction.

Children's minds, at early ages are far from linguistic empty space into which reading information is to be poured.... children should be permitted to be active participants in teaching themselves to read. In fact, they ought to direct the process... by reversing the usual order..." This means that one of the best ways of teaching children to read is by teaching writing first.

Several different early childhood programs have shown great success when writing is introduced first. Programs demonstrated a number of benefits:

1. First is the concept that early writing helps children crack the reading code. The premise is that words are made of sounds that are written with letters creating a sound symbol relationship that is connected to the reading process. For example, the short 'a' with 't' creates the sound 'at'. Knowing this basic sound makes reading, 'The cat sat in the hat' much easier not only to decode, but to comprehend as well.
2. Second, the first words students read are often the first ones they write. These early experiences allow young writers to express their own thoughts. Writing is a brainpower workout. They go on to explain that at the early stages, the process of writing introduces students to the skills and techniques for composition and storytelling. It provides an introduction to purposeful writing, and the consideration of format and audience.
3. Finally, early writing is a useful assessment of reading ability by allowing a teacher to assess a student's reading skills by monitoring their writing progress.

For example, let's say Mrs. Harding wants her students to write a memoir. She starts with a quick-write activity where students list six events in their childhood that stick out in their memories. From those six, the students read over their lists and choose three that are the most prominent in their memories. From there, they

choose one memory to write about. Now they have used an organizational technique to choose a topic and a purpose for their composition. From there they create their memoir, allow their peers to read, comment, and provide feedback, and then create a full draft that will be reviewed and assessed by Mrs. Harding using a rubric. Mrs. Harding then goes on to conference with the student through several rereads and editing.

However, the question now is, ‘Is this the same process for second language (L2) learners?’ Some research has shown that in learning to write, native English speakers and L2 learners follow a similar developmental process. For example, while still learning English, students can write and compose personalized text. Text produced by English learners is similar in style and format to those who are native English speakers. This demonstrates that the L2 learner is making predictions and is developing a working comprehension of how written English works.










One thing which should be taken into consideration is that the classroom environment, along with the students’ culture, has a substantial impact, both positive and negative, on writing, such as: the purpose for writing, functions of writing, and the personal view of the student as a writer. For example, a student may come from a culture where one writes an essay through an inductive process where all of the evidence is given first, then a conclusion is drawn. However, the students’ new culture may prefer a deductive format that begins with a general premise that must be proven. If the teacher is not aware of the cultural format for writing, he/she may mark the student’s work as incorrect. On the other hand, having this understanding may open up the classroom to diverse and enriching formats to try out when it comes to the writing process.

One tool to assist the L2 writer is the use of the native language as the conceptual base which facilitates the child’s ESL writing. It is important to take into

consideration that L2 learners apply the writing knowledge gained from L1 settings to L2 settings (Hudelson, 1990).

As previously mentioned, one of the best ways of teaching children to read is by teaching writing first. Writing facilitates the thinking processes, provides guidance as students learn and practice the process, and allows students to express ideas using examples, literary devices, and creativity (Aumen, 2006). Through this knowledge and skill, students are now open to comprehending how authors do the same. Therefore, reading becomes a partner skill where students not only decode, but also analyze, evaluate, and comprehend the written word in a much more personal experience.

Teachers play an important role in the development of young learners' emergent writing by encouraging them to communicate their thoughts and record their ideas. In some early childhood classrooms, however, emergent writing experiences are almost nonexistent. One recent study, which is in accord with earlier research, found that 4- and 5-year-olds (spread across 81 classrooms) averaged just two minutes a day either writing or being taught writing. This article shares a framework for understanding emergent writing and ties the framework to differentiating young learner's emergent writing experiences.

Stages of Emergent Writing		
Stage	Description	Example
Drawing	Drawings that represent writing	
Scribbling	Marks or scribbles the child intends to be writing	
Wavy scribbles or mock handwriting	Wavy scribbles that imitate cursive writing and have a left-to-right progression; child pretends to write words	
Letter-like forms or mock letters	Letters and marks that resemble letter-like shapes	
Letter strings	Strings of letters that do not create words, written left to right, including uppercase and lowercase letters	
Transitional writing	Letters with spaces in between to resemble words; letters/words copied from environmental print; letters often reversed	
Invented or phonetic spelling	Different ways to represent the sounds in words; the first letter of the word or beginning and ending sounds represent the entire word	
Beginning word and phrase writing	Words with beginning, middle, and ending letter sounds; short phrases	
Conventional spelling and sentence writing	Correct spelling of words, generally the child's name and words such as <i>mom</i> and <i>dad</i> ; sentences with punctuation and correct use of uppercase and lowercase letters	

Procedural knowledge is the mechanics of letter and word writing (e.g., name writing) and includes spelling and gaining alphabet knowledge. Learning the alphabetic code (including how to form letters and the sounds associated with each letter) is an essential component of gaining procedural knowledge. Children benefit from having multiple opportunities throughout the day to develop fine motor skills and finger

dexterity using a variety of manipulatives (e.g., magnetic letters, pegboards) and writing implements. By integrating authentic materials into the curriculum, educators can create a dynamic and immersive learning environment that encourages students to practice their newly acquired language skills in real-world contexts. Motivation is an abstract concept that cannot be directly observed, yet educators play a crucial role in fostering it among learners. Motivation is an internal state that propels individuals to engage in goal-directed behavior.

Generative knowledge describes learner's abilities to write phrases and sentences that convey meaning. It is the ability to translate thoughts into writing that goes beyond the word level. During early childhood, teachers are laying the foundation for generative knowledge as children learn to express themselves orally and experiment with different forms of written communication, such as composing a story, writing notes, creating lists, and taking messages. Children can dictate words, phrases, or sentences that an adult can record on paper, or they can share ideas for group writing.

The discussion extends to second language (L2) learners, noting that their writing development follows patterns similar to native speakers, as they produce personalized texts and demonstrate emerging understanding of English writing conventions. Cultural and classroom contexts are highlighted as influential factors that shape writing styles, purposes, and structures, emphasizing the need for teachers' cultural awareness. The use of learners' first language as a conceptual foundation is also identified as supportive in ESL writing development.

Finally, the article underscores the teacher's role in nurturing emergent writing. Despite its importance, research shows that writing opportunities in early childhood classrooms remain limited. The article proposes a framework for understanding and differentiating emergent writing experiences, advocating for richer, more frequent writing engagement to strengthen both writing and reading as interconnected literacy skills.

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