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ABSTRACT

To assist second language teachers, administrators, parents, and other teachers to better understand how foreign language instruction helps students develop literacy skills, this paper discusses research about the commonalities between first and second language reading and writing. It is an outgrowth of the North Carolina State Board of Education's plan for restructuring public education. Sections of the paper address (1) the comparison of reading and writing in first and second language; (2) the reading and writing process; (3) some effective reading and writing strategies; (4) the connection to the second language curriculum; and (5) assessment. The paper also briefly discusses the role of grammar in writing, the interrelation of the four language skills, and the use of authentic text in reading and writing. Contains 17 references. (RS)

First and Second Language:

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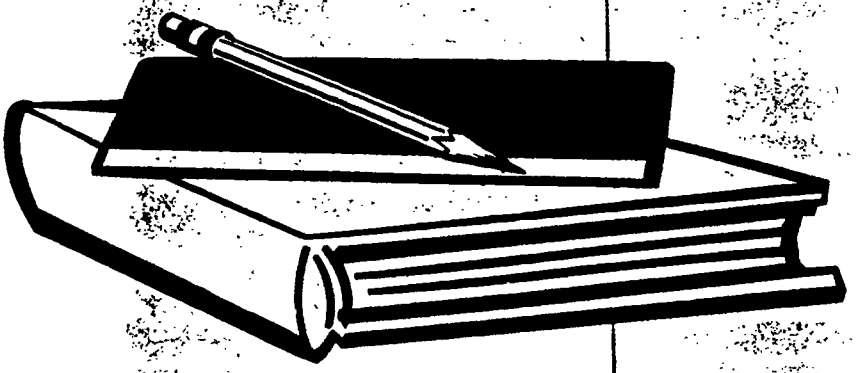

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First and Second Language: the Reading and Writing Connection

Abstract

In an effort to make the research about the commonalities between first and second language reading and writing more accessible to administrators and teachers, this article looks at:

(a) the comparison of reading and writing in first and second language;
(b) the reading and writing process;
(c) some effective reading and writing strategies;
(d) the connection to the second language curriculum;
(e) assessment.

Also, the role of grammar in writing, the interrelation of the four language skills, and the use of authentic text in reading and writing are briefly discussed.

Introduction

In May, 1995, the North Carolina State Board of Education outlined its plan for restructuring public education. One of the key components of the Board's framework was a focus on the basics. In *The New ABC's of Public Education*, the Board stated: "While schools must teach many things, the Board believes that schools must ensure that all students master the basics of reading, mathematics, and writing. Only through this mastery can students hope to perform well in other school subjects and participate fully as citizens in a democracy." The study of another language can play an important role in helping students acquire the fundamental reading and writing skills.

As described in the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study*, the focus of the second language curriculum is the "progressive development of the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the second language within the context of the culture in which the language is spoken." Learning another language contributes to the whole school program by offering students many opportunities to develop various oral and written communication skills and by offering insights into the way languages work. It can provide students with valuable experiences which reinforce knowledge by enabling them to talk, write, and read in the foreign language. Empirical data supports the numerous spin-off benefits for learning another language:

1) improved reading and writing proficiency in the first language;
2) clearer understanding of English grammar; and
3) increased mastery of abstract vocabulary.

The purpose of this article is to compare reading and writing in first and second languages and to describe successful second language reading and writing strategies. A summary of recent research is included. It is hoped that the information contained here will assist second language teachers in classrooms and will enable administrators, parents, and other teachers to better understand how foreign language instruction helps students develop literacy skills.

I. Comparison of Reading and Writing in First and Second Language

Research in the field of first and second language acquisition demonstrates that the way a second language is learned is highly similar to the way a first language is learned (Chomsky, 1980). From the theory on language acquisition, we know that languages are acquired in real-life, natural settings through interactions with others (Curtain and Pesola, 1994). In addition, the research points out that both languages share a common set of proficiencies which transfer from one language to the other (Fitzgerald, 1994).

In their article "Literacy Scaffolds: Strategies for First and Second Language Readers," Boyle and Peregoy (1990) state:

> . . . Reading and writing processes are essentially similar for both groups. For example, second language readers make use of graphic, syntactic, and semantic cues provided in a text to predict and confirm meaning, much as first language readers do (Clarke, 1980; Cziko, 1978, 1980; Goodman and Goodman, 1978). In addition, first and second language readers alike make use of their background knowledge to construct meaning (Anderson and Pearson, 1984; Carrell, 1988).

However, Boyle and Peregoy (1990) assert that while reading processes are similar for first and second language readers, second language learners are hindered in their comprehension by limited second language proficiency (Clarke, 1980; Cziko, 1980). By building and activating background knowledge prior to reading, teachers can help children compensate for some of the effects of limited second language knowledge and, therefore, raise their level of comprehension (Hudson, 1982; Johnson, 1981).

Furthermore, Boyle and Peregoy (1990) believe that first and second language learners also display similar processes in writing development. They suggest that second language learners incorporate their developing knowledge of the language as they select audience, purpose, and form when creating a text, just as first language writers do. Moreover, they cite research stating that "if literate in the first language, second language learners are apt to show a sophisticated understanding of the nature and functions of print as well as confidence in their ability to produce and comprehend text in their new language (Hudelson, 1987)."

In addition, current research shows that successful first and second language learners use a variety of language learning strategies (Zimmerman and Pons, 1986). Rebecca Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as "... often-conscious steps or behaviors used by language learners to enhance the acquisition, storage, retention, recall, and use of information." The conscious teaching and inclusion of such strategies within the second language classroom promotes and reinforces the language skills in both languages.

Finally in their article "Literacy Scaffolds: Strategies for First and Second Language Readers," Boyle and Peregoy (1990) quote research which demonstrates that:

> . . . Students can profitably engage in reading and writing in their second language well before they have gained full control over the phonological, syntactic, and semantic systems of spoken English (Goodman, Goodman and Flores, 1978, Hudelson, 1984). In fact, reading in a second language provides an excellent source of input for further second language development (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Krashen, 1982), and writing provides valuable second language practice as well.

II. Reading

Second language reading differs from first language reading in that most students (except those in immersion programs) have already made the connection between reading and a written symbol for that meaning and transfer the skills they have acquired in one language to another (Curtain and Pesola, 1994).

A. The Reading Process

Recent research and reading theory indicate that "reading is characterized by active engagement through which meaning is created" (Zamel, 1992). Most foreign language reading experts also view reading as an interactive language process focused on comprehension rather than on a set of subskills learned in isolation with decoding as the focus. The readers interact with the text to create meaning (Bernhardt, 1986; Carrell, Devine, and Eskey, 1988; Rumelhart, 1977). Barnett (1988) adds that the level of comprehension of the text is influenced by how successfully the readers (their preexisting knowledge of the text, their interest in it, their purpose for reading it, and their foreign language abilities) interact with the text (the text type, the grammar, and the vocabulary).

One additional important part of interactive process theory emphasizes schemata, the reader's preexisting concepts about the world and about the text to be read. There is empirical evidence to support the notion that when students activate appropriate background knowledge relevant to the text they are about to read, this background knowledge compensates for a limited command of a linguistic system and, therefore, raises the level of comprehension (Barnett, 1988; Floyd and Carrell; 1987; Swaffar et al., 1988). Into this schemata, the readers fit what they find in any passage.

The North Carolina Communication Skills Curriculum (1992) describes reading as a "constructive process involving three different sources: the reader, the text, and the task." This holistic process engages the reader a series of stages: preparation/prereading, engagement/while reading, and response/postreading. This same process is followed by readers of a foreign language. At each level of this process, effective readers "are consciously aware of how they process print and of the connections between the various aspects of the processes" (*North Carolina Communication Skills Curriculum*, 1992).

The reading process and the characteristics of effective learners are displayed in the following chart:

1. Preparation/Prereading.
   Before reading effective readers:
   - Preview the text
   - Activate and build background knowledge and activate the schemata
   - Set purposes for the activity
   - Focus their attention on the task
   - Make predictions about the content

2. Engagement/While reading
   During the reading process, effective readers:
   - Check their understanding by paraphrasing author's words
   - Monitor comprehension by using context clues, imaging, imagining, influencing and predicting
   - Integrate new concepts with existing knowledge

- Reread and revise their purposes
- Use a "fix up" strategy when they do not understand
- Give complete attention to the task

3. Response/Postreading
   After reading, effective readers:
   - Summarize what has been read
   - Reflect on and evaluate the information and ideas contained in the selection
   - Respond and make applications of the information and ideas
   - Seek additional information
   - Decide if they have achieved their goals
   - Want to read again
   - Persevere with difficult texts

   (*North Carolina Communication Skills Curriculum*, 1992, p. 18)

B. Using Effective Second Language Reading Strategies

First language research has found that readers' purposes and approaches to texts differ not only by text, but by the individual reader. Second language researchers have drawn upon this information and have found similarities between the reading strategies of first and second language readers. Barnett (1995) mentions research stating that "proficient second language readers monitor their comprehension much as proficient first language readers; less proficient second language readers perform similarly to less proficient first language readers" (Block, 1992).

In her article "Teaching Reading in a Foreign Language," Barnett (1988) stipulates that "when teachers of second language reading recognize that each reader brings to the reading process a unique set of past experiences, emotional and mental processes, level of cognitive development, and interest level in the topic, they also recognize that not all teaching strategies will be effective for all students." She adds that teachers can help students identify effective reading strategies and that students can be encouraged to implement them when reading in a second language. Those strategies should be explicitly taught through simple exercises developed to elicit information via targeted strategies. According to Barnett, these exercises can be divided by the stage of reading at which they occur.

> **"Prereading"** activities introduce students to a particular text, elicit or provide appropriate background knowledge, and activate necessary schemata. Previewing a text with students should arouse their interest and help them approach the text in a more meaningful and purposeful manner as the discussion compels them to think about the situation or points raised in a text. The prereading phase helps students define selection criteria for the central theme of a story or the major arguments of an essay. Prereading activities include: discussing author or text type, brainstorming, reviewing familiar stories (students review Cinderella before reading Cendrillon), considering illustrations and titles, skimming and scanning (for structure, main points, and future directions). Advance organizers are also useful for helping students direct attention to the task and for focusing on important information.
>
> **"While reading"** exercises help students develop reading strategies, improve their control of the second language, and decode problematic text passages. Helping students to employ strategies while reading can be difficult because individual students control and need different strategies. Nevertheless, the teacher can pinpoint valuable strategies, explain which strategies individuals most need to practice, and offer concrete exercises. Such practice exercises might include guessing

word meanings by using context clues, word formation clues, or cognate practice; considering syntax and sentence structure by noting the grammatical functions of unknown words, analyzing reference words, and predicting text content; reading for specific pieces of information; and learning to use the dictionary effectively.

"Postreading" exercises first check the students' comprehension and then lead students to a deeper analysis of the text, when warranted. Because the goals of most real world reading are not to memorize an author's point of view or to summarize text content, but rather to see into another mind, or to mesh new information into what one already knows, second language reading must go beyond detail-eliciting comprehension drills to help students recognize that different strategies are appropriate with different text types. For example, scanning is an appropriate strategy to use with newspaper advertisements whereas predicting and following text cohesion are effective strategies to use with short stories. By discussing in groups what they have understood, students focus on information they did not comprehend, or did not comprehend correctly. Discussions of this nature can lead the student directly to text analysis as class discussion proceeds from determining facts to exploring deeper ramifications of the texts.

"Follow-up" exercises take students beyond the particular reading text in one or two ways: by transferring reading skills to other texts or by integrating reading skills with other language skills (Phillips, 1985). Transferable reading strategies are those that readers can assimilate and use with other texts. Exercises that emphasize the transfer of skills include beginning a new text similar to a text for which effective strategies have already been taught, i.e., giving students the front page of a newspaper to read after they have learned to read the table of contents of a journal. Integrative activities use text language and ideas in second language listening, speaking, and/or writing. Integrative skills exercises include such activities as students reacting to texts with summaries; new endings; reenacting text; dramatizing interviews based on the text; carefully listening for key words or phrases in authentic video or audio tapes; and creating role-play situations or simulations of cultural experiences.
(ERIC Digest, 1988)

In addition, Barnett (1988) states that teachers can help students select and implement strategies by identifying the different kinds of texts available to the readers. She believes that "pointing out the differences between a fairy tale and a newspaper article helps the reader to recognize the different text types and to prepare for the uncomplicated sentence structure, high-frequency vocabulary, and, in most cases, happy ending that typically characterize a fairy tale." A different approach would be used in preparation for reading a newspaper article.

C. Reading in the North Carolina Second Language Studies Curriculum and Suggested Activities

The North Carolina Second Language Studies K-12 Curriculum has identified the following goal for reading: "To understand the written language in context from print and nonprint materials in the target language." Reading is divided into three developmental stages corresponding to proficiency guidelines defined by ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages). Students progress through the three successive stages as they first read memorized words and phrases, identify main ideas and sequence of events, and finally show understanding of the author's point of view or purpose. Reading is therefore introduced as a means of grasping the whole message. Throughout the reading process, students are involved in thinking skills such as inference, classification, prediction, etc.

One must not forget to mention that even though most second language readers have already established the relationship between the written word and the concept it represents, special considerations must be

made for students of languages not based on the Roman alphabet. Those students will be involved in character recognition and will take longer to reach basic levels of proficiency than their counterparts.

The three stages as outlined in the *North Carolina Second Language Studies Curriculum* are:

1. Stage One (Novice Level):
   Can identify some isolated words and expressions. Can pick out main ideas and key words in familiar material. Can recall facts from series of connected sentences. Can make inferences from material read.

   Activities:
   - Label items, locations, and activities in the room.
   - Match labels with corresponding pictures.
   - Illustrate selected words from a story.
   - Read a short passage and fill in a chart with requested information.
   - Classify words according to own criteria.
   - Sequence a group of sentences in logical order.
   - Read directions and follow them.
   - Select the word which does not belong.
   - Connect text to illustrations.
   - Read a short paragraph with words missing and complete the paragraph by choosing words from a word bank.
   - Brainstorm the type of information which might be required on a passport application.
   - Read a train schedule and answer what, where, when questions.

2. Stage Two (Intermediate Low and Intermediate Mid):
   Can get gist, key ideas, and some supporting details. Can identify a sequence of events. Can read familiar written materials for the purpose of summarizing.

   Activities:
   - Read the description of an animal or object and draw the corresponding picture.
   - Read an advertisement from the yellow pages and answer who, what, where, when questions.
   - Read a travel brochure and devise an itinerary including sites to visit, food to sample, and local attractions.
   - Read a letter received from a pen pal and share the main points and several supporting details with a partner.
   - Read an account of a teenager's day in the target culture and depict the sequence of events using a graphic organizer.
   - After reading a story, complete a story skeleton.

3. Stage Three (Intermediate High and Advanced):
   Can understand main ideas and most supporting details of factual narrations and descriptions. Can understand abstract topics in a familiar context. Can make predictions, judgments and draw inferences from written materials.

   Activities:
   - Read the introduction, bold print, topics and conclusion of a selection. From this information, predict and outline the probable information. Revise the outline after reading the complete selection.
   - Use the SQ3R strategy (Survey, ask questions, read, recite, and review) when reading a text.
   - Using the Internet and the World Wide Web, read an article in a newspaper of the target language

and summarize the main ideas and supporting details.
- Skim a newspaper article and choose an appropriate title for it.
- Read an editorial from a newspaper and react to the writer's point of view.
- Match a series of passages with their function (invitation, announcement, wanted ads, warning, etc.)

While it is accepted that all students start acquiring a second language in the same way and therefore pass through the same stages of language development, it is essential to involve them in learning activities which are appropriate for their ages, interests, experiences, as well as to their language and cognitive development. For example: a third grader would not be asked to read a comparison of two countries since the concept of country is one that has not been mastered in his/her first language yet. A more appropriate activity might be to read a comparison of two people, animals, or objects. In addition, at the beginning levels of proficiency, reading and writing should be expansions of listening and speaking activities.

Additional activities and sample measures can be found in the *North Carolina Second Language Studies Curriculum.*

III. Writing

As in reading, by the time second language students (except for those in immersion programs) begin to write, they have already made the connection between the spoken word and the symbol for that word on paper. This skill is then easily transferred from the first language to the second language.

Writing is language and thought made visible on paper. Before writing proficiency can be developed, attention must be paid to oral language development. Until recently, the writing process has been largely ignored in favor of the finished product; however, in their article "Writing Across the (Foreign Language) Curriculum," Jaraush and Tufts (1987) stress that:

> The purposes of writing in the foreign language classroom are not fundamentally different from those in other disciplines, even if the level is more basic. At the most elementary level, students are able to use their writing to communicate in the target language. They can, for example, write lists, fill out forms, complete questionnaires, relate phone messages, and do a variety of other tasks that require basically a writing down of memorized material.

At a more advanced level, students can develop personal résumés, organized summaries, reports, and articles as well as express their personal point of view and support it.

As with the first language, the audience and the purpose of a writing task should be clearly stated. When students write only for the teacher, they have no incentive to vary their prose. If the targeted audience goes beyond the teacher, the writing assignments become more meaningful. Students can write for themselves (lists of chores, journal), for the teacher, penpals, classmates, friends, businesses. In addition, writing tasks which grow out of a need and which reflect a real life situation motivate the students to ensure that their message/request is clear. In this manner, the written word serves to communicate real information.

A. Writing As A Process

The process approach to writing is ideally suited to foreign language classes since listening, speaking, and reading can be integrated so naturally with it. In addition, it can help foreign language teachers enjoy bringing writing back into their curriculum. Instead of seeing themselves as teachers of writing, many language teachers view themselves as teachers of language. For them the question then becomes: "How do we teach writing as a process when we are primarily supposed to teach the language itself?"

The North Carolina Communication Skills Curriculum (1992) describes writing as a multi-stage process which includes pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

Pre-Writing

Prepares the student to approach the writing task with confidence. During this phase, topic is generated, purpose, audience and form are clarified. Pre-writing activities such as class discussion, predicting, word banks, student notebooks, drawing, modeling, clustering, webbing, and brainstorming can be employed.

Teachers need not be afraid of spending too much time on the pre-writing phase because time spent in this activity will strengthen the rest of the process and ensure a more satisfactory final product.

(*North Carolina Communication Skills Curriculum,* 1992, pp. 28-29)

Scott (1995) notes that generating ideas is the most challenging feature of the foreign language writing process since students are limited by a small lexicon and minimal grammatical knowledge.

Drafting

Drafting is the pouring of words on paper to catch ideas. Students begin with the notes which were generated during the pre-writing.

Revising

Many students do not see writing as a process. They believe that when they complete their first draft, the writing is finished. Through sentence combining, pattern writing, and language play, students learn to use sentence variety, to choose appropriate words, and to expand the ideas in previous draft. The role of the teacher is to encourage students to experiment and manipulate language in order to select specific words to create vivid images.

(*North Carolina Communication Skills Curriculum*, 1992, pp. 29)

Krashen (1984) adds that good first and second language writers spend more time planning and revising than poor writers.

Editing

Editing is the stage in which the material is made suitable for publication. It addresses the issues of proper grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Publishing

Publishing the writer's work completes the composing process. Publication provides the opportunity for the writer's product to be shared with and/or evaluated by the intended audience or readers in general. The purpose of publishing is to reinforce that writing is an act of communication.

(*North Carolina Communication Skills Curriculum*, 1992, pp. 30-33)

In their article "Writing Across the (Foreign Language) Curriculum," Jaraush and Tufts (1987) state that second language "... writing is improved when students prepare a series of drafts, with feedback (from peers and teachers) concerning content, not just grammar, preceding each revision. Peer editing can be effective at this stage, encouraging students to be responsible for each other, allowing them to share ideas, and teaching them to read critically."

Zamel's study (1983) underscores the finding that better second language writers treated writing as a process, investigating and explaining their ideas before worrying about grammatical accuracy.

B. Writing Strategies

Research confirms that writing strategies such as planning, organizing, and revising carry over from first to second language (Zamel, 1983; Jones and Tetroe, 1987; Eisterhold, 1990; Friedlander, 1990). It follows that second language teachers can help students identify and implement successful strategies for writing in the second language. The following strategies can be targeted for use with and by writers of a second language:

- Brainstorming or completing knowledge charts to activate schemata or prior knowledge.
- Using a graphic organizer as the basis for collecting information for written compositions and oral speeches.
- Completing outlines.
- Webbing to facilitate the organization of information and/or knowledge.
- Helping students become involved in simple description with visuals, paragraph completion, cloze passages, sentence builders, dictations, filling in forms, cinquain poetry, dialogue completion.
- Stressing tasks that involve repetition of familiar elements, with small variations.
- Practicing dictations with learned material.
- Stressing tasks with real-life functions e.g., shopping lists, calendar notations, filling out forms.
- Note taking, writing down key words and concepts in abbreviated form.
- Completing graphic fill-ins, slash sentences, telegraphic clues, sentence combining.
- Elaborating, relating new information to prior knowledge, or making meaningful personal associations to the new information.
- Guiding descriptions and narrations, compositions based on interviews.
- Writing entries in dialogue journals, daily journals, compositions
- Stressing tasks for real life communications e.g., messages, notes, daily journal.
- Involving students in compositions (guided and free) and rewrites, as well as peer editing.
- Engaging in self monitoring while writing is taking place.
- Classifying words, terminology, or concepts according to their attributes.
- Using reference materials such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, or textbooks.

C. Writing in the North Carolina Second Language Studies Curriculum and Suggested Activities

The North Carolina Second Language Studies K-12 Curriculum (1994) has outlined the following goal for writing: "To write so as to be understood by a native of the target culture." As they progress toward this goal, students move through the following three stages: writing words and phrases from memory; creating with the language; and beginning to use language to narrate, describe, support points of view and discuss ideas. These three developmental stages correspond to proficiency guidelines defined by ACTFL (The

American Council on theTeaching of Foreign Languages).

Special consideration must be made for students beginning the study of a language which does not rely on the Roman alphabet, who, unlike learners of French, German and Spanish, have to master a variety of characters before they can proceed to write for communication. For those students, a longer sequence of time is necessary to reach basic levels of proficiency.

The three stages described in the *Second Language Studies Curriculum* and their corresponding proficiency level(s) are:

1. Stage One (Novice Level)
   Can copy and transcribe very simple material in familiar context. Can list, identify and label. Can write a familiar phrase, statement, or question in context. Can generate in writing two or more related sentences in context.

   Activities:
   - Make a list of items you wish to take with you on an upcoming trip.
   - Participate in pattern writing as a group and individually.
   - Participate in a language experience by dictating sentences to the tea ıer and copying and illustrating the final product.
   - Maintain personal dictionaries, develop word banks, or label information within the class room.
   - Write captions under pictures to demonstrate key ideas.
   - Complete an identification form or an interest inventory.
   - Introduce yourself in a short letter to a penpal.
   - Write 2-3 questions to ask a friend.

2. Stage Two (Intermediate Low and Intermediate Mid):
   Can create statements and questions well enough to meet practical needs and some limited social demands. Can write short messages, notes, letters, paragraphs, short compositions, can take simple notes. Can compose a series of related sentences that describe, compare or contrast people, places, things, and/or activities. Can write one or more sentences that classify, summarize, predict, judge, or infer.

   Activities:
   - Write a short biography/personal narrative noting major personal or family events.
   - Write letters, notes, advertisements.
   - Develop interview questions for family members or other community citizens.
   - Use a Venn diagram to note similarities and differences.
   - Summarize main points on a graphic organizer.
   - Collect factual information about a geographical location. Synthesize the information and formulate statements about the area, 5 positive and 5 negative.
   - Read, view, or listen to a story. Identify the story structure using a diagram.
   - List questions generated from the title of a selection.
   - Complete an opinion survey to identify favorite heroes, singers, pastimes, etc. Graph and summarize results.
   - Take notes as you interview a peer, or parent. Recombine the notes to form a paragraph.
   - Select a visual and describe the scenery, activities, etc.

3. Stage Three (Intermediate High and Advanced):
   Can write social and more formal correspondence, discourse of several paragraphs, cohesive summaries, résumés with some details, description and narration. Can take notes. Can express emotions,

feelings and preferences and give supporting details. Can explain point of view simply.

Activities:

- Complete a K-W-L (Know-Want to Know-Learn) chart to develop background knowledge.
- Write a letter requesting information to the Embassy of a selected country speaking the target language.
- Write a script and produce a videotape in the format of a news broadcast.
- Take written notes about an interview with a peer, parent, or grandparent about a holiday or a special event and note similarities and differences in past and present ways of celebrating.
- Read a newspaper article and write a letter to the editor (persuasive or point of view) reflecting personal beliefs on the topic.
- Write regular entries in a dialogue journal.
- Invent a product. Display it and write the accompanying commercial to accompany it.
- Narrate your activities during a typical school day and compare them to those of a teenager in the target country.
- Describe with some details a visual or a work of art.
- Write a review of a restaurant, film, or book.

It is essential to note that the tasks designed to help students expand their writing abilities have to be developmentally appropriate and reflect the writers' level of language as well. The activities should be geared toward the students' maturity, wide range of interests, and should relate to their attitudes and previous experiences. It is equally important to provide opportunities to use the written language in a variety of ways, in addition to writing assigned compositions or completing controlled exercises (Payton, 1986). Writing in a second language should be functional and used to accomplish a wide range of real-life tasks that are meaningful to the students.

Additional suggestions for activities and sample measures can be found in the *North Carolina Second Language Studies Curriculum.*

D. The Role of Grammar in Writing

A special mention should be made about the role of grammar in writing. The practice of teaching grammar in isolation through written exercises has "negligible or even harmful effect on the improvement of writing... Grammar does not exist outside of a sentence" (*North Carolina Communication Skills Curriculum*, 1992). Activities involving fragments of language, which impede the exchange of ideas, make learning how to write much more difficult. In a proficiency-oriented curriculum, the focus is on "teaching for communication, grammar and vocabulary are not treated as specific objectives" (*North Carolina Second Language Studies Curriculum*, 1994). Grammatical concepts (functions) are taught and applied in context. While grammar is important, it is best to delay focusing on the accuracy alone prior to the editing phase.

IV. Reading and Writing

The teaching of reading and writing should be done simultaneously and should be an outgrowth of oral language development; therefore, it should be learned in the same manner. Students learn to read and write by using reading and writing in ways which meet their needs. Beginning students of the language must have the opportunity to write what they can say and read what they have written. In a proficiency driven curriculum, students write lists, messages, letters, notes to be read by their peers, pen pals, etc. for

the purpose of transmitting ideas. They read and respond to messages, newspaper articles, or electronic messages. They write pattern books, making use of repeated phrases, and they read them to younger children, their peers, parents, etc. Dialogue journals also provide for interactive reading and writing in much the same way as conversation provides for interactive listening and speaking. Peer editing is another excellent procedure which showcases the interaction of the two skills since it encourages students to react to their fellow students' writing. Omaggio (1986) states that "teachers should bear in mind that writing practice should be integrated with practice in listening, speaking, and reading so that language skills are not artificially separated." Thus, students have the opportunity to engage in authentic language for communicative purposes.

Reading, Writing and the Use of Authentic Texts

Fitzgerald (1994) believes that "... teachers should provide lots of opportunity for reading, writing, and conversation with interested partners; optimize comprehensible input; optimize the learner's interest in the discourse by selecting interesting and/or relevant topics, such as school subject-area content; and provide opportunities for learners to manage conversation and literacy." Reading and writing purposes should be very clear and should be geared toward the students' interests. Rusciolelli is of the opinion that "... reading can become more productive and pleasurable as instructors discover new ways to teach this skill and use authentic materials to stimulate student interest" (Bacon, 1987; Spinelli and Sisken, 1992; Swaffer, 1992). Some possible authentic texts to use within the second language environment are as follows:

1. Environmental print: signs, ads, graffiti, posters, directions, consumer items, sales, notices, labels, prices, brand names

2. Community/workplace materials: signs, printed hand-outs, advertisements, tourist information, bus schedules, information brochures, timetables, maps, travel brochures, guidebooks, telephone directories

3. Cards: birthday, wedding, sympathy, thank you, invitation, birth, greeting

4. School communication: report cards, letters home, lunch calendars, permission slips, parent notices

5. Real literature: books on tape, children's books, books for young readers

6. Forms: driver's license, credit cards, employment, order forms

7. Students' own writing: letters, poems, folktales, dialogue journal, personal/family stories,language experience stories, songs, riddles, proverbs, other students'stories

8. Newspapers/magazines: comics, headlines, shopping ads, weather, movies, classified ads

9. Miscellaneous: notes, messages, how-to manuals, labels, receipts, telephone yellow pages, junk mail, catalogues, directories, tickets, recipes, warranties, recipe books

When using authentic materials, caution must be made to define carefully the task to be completed so as not to overwhelm the students with language they cannot yet access.

V. Assessment

In their article "Writing Across the (Foreign Language) Curriculum," Jaraush and Tufts (1987) remind us that:

> ... If writing is a means of communication, the focus should be on audience, thought, content, and purpose with accuracy as only one criterion among many. The teaching of writing is not synonymous with error elimination. If only grammatical perfection is rewarded, students will limit themselves to producing error free prose, whether or not it is interesting or even meaningful.

However, one must be aware that grammatical errors, numerous enough to interfere with understanding, cannot be ignored.

Barnett (1992) advances the notion that holistic scoring provides teachers with the necessary tool to validate the message. Errors are not considered individually in rating the writing; instead the overall effectiveness of the message is taken into account. When students realize that teachers read their writing to understand the message rather than to judge their spelling, agreement, verb endings, and word order, they write more interesting compositions. They are also willing to write more, which is perhaps the best way to become better writers and they eventually take more care with what they write because it means more to them. Osterholm believes that "... positive comments bring about more positive attitudes toward writing." Of course, students benefit immensely; working on their writing ability in a second language, as well as in a first language, can only improve their general cognitive skills of reasoning and logical thinking.

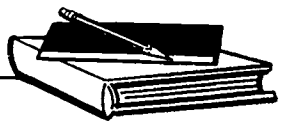
Much of the current research suggests that it is less important to mark all errors in student composition than it is to have students write frequently. Furthermore, Semke (1984) has found that marking formal errors on students' free writing assignments is ineffective for increasing writing accuracy, and suggests that the effect could even be detrimental since students reported that they had a more negative attitude toward the writing experience as a result of the teacher's written corrections.

In his article "Evaluation of Foreign Language Learners' Writing Ability," Paulson concludes: "Rather than asking 'Did you check that all your accent marks are correct?', the teacher can ask 'Did you read this back to yourself? Is it clear? Does it say what YOU want to say?'"

Conclusion

The study of a second language supports the focus placed on reading and writing outlined by the State Board of Education in *The New ABC's of Public Education*. Through the study of another language, students have the opportunity to strengthen their first language skills. Second language learning theory suggests that students learn another language in much the same way as they learn their first and that what is learned in one language is shared by the other (Fitzgerald, 1994). Students use the same strategies and processes as they approach a reading or writing task, therefore, reinforcing the transfer of learning. Research shows that students who study another language score significantly higher on their SAT verbal than non-foreign language students. Also, children who study another language in elementary school achieve expected gains and even have higher scores on standardized testing in reading, language arts, and math than those who have not (Masciantonio, 1977; Rafferty, 1986). In addition, the research points to an especially significant relationship between high scores in reading and extended foreign language study (Garfinkel & Tabor, 1991).

The document "Core of Essential Concepts for Language Arts and Foreign Languages" emphasizes that "the learning of all languages involves refining communication abilities in reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking and viewing within a cultural context. " The national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (1995), reinforce the notion that: "To study another language is to gain an especially rich preparation for the future. It is difficult to imagine a job, a profession, or a leisure activity in the 21st century which will not be enhanced by the ability to communicate efficiently and effectively with others." To this effect, the study of a second language can prepare a citizenry which can function in and contribute to the growing interactive community in our state, in our country, and in the world.



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