There are a number of very compelling reasons for including a book on reading-writing connections in a series such as ours, which is devoted to helping teachers of multilingual writers. Not least of these is the current state of knowledge of the synergistic relationship of the reading and writing processes. We have been aware for several decades now of the cognitive advantages of linking reading and writing activities. There are probably few intensive English programs or secondary/postsecondary ESL composition or “bridge” classes these days that do not make some attempt to integrate these literacy skills in their curricula. Moving from a cognitive to a more social-epistemic vantage point, we see that, in addition to the learning strategy advantages, there are real-world, or discourse community, motivations for connecting reading and writing pedagogically. It is difficult to find a community, academic or otherwise, in which whatever writing is accomplished is not to some extent “text responsible prose” (Leki and Carson, 1997)—that is, responsive to information gleaned from reading, whether from print or electronic sources. Multilingual writers unprepared for such community expectations may find the doors to membership in the particular literacy club (Smith, 1987) they seek to join rather hard to open.

There may not be many L2 literacy instructors, with the exception of those new to the field, who still need to be persuaded of the validity of the preceding arguments, yet many may feel that they are indeed in need of the type of guidance in the optimal blending of reading-writing instruction that Alan Hirvela provides in *Connecting Reading and Writing in Second Language Writing Instruction*. As Hirvela points out
(this volume), there are surprisingly few relevant resources available in the professional L2 literature. The Carson and Leki (1993) and Belcher and Hirvela (2001) anthologies of scholarly articles are no doubt useful resources, but neither provides the sustained, cohesive view of integrated L2 reading-writing pedagogy with practitioners foremost in mind that can be found in *Connecting Reading and Writing*. Hirvela’s extensive knowledge of both L1 and L2 reading-writing research (the latter of which he himself has impressively contributed to), his talent for translating theoretical abstractions into easy-to-understand terms, and his own grounding in L2 classroom experience, as one who taught ESL for many years and currently teaches TESOL graduate students, makes him especially well suited to the task he has set for himself in this book. From firsthand experience, he understands how to convert research and theory into effective classroom practice and how to help others appreciate the value of doing so. Current practitioners as well as those in training and their faculty mentors will likely especially value the scope of Hirvela’s text:

- the contextualization and rationale building of the historical and theoretical overviews
- the alternating and ultimately reinforcing perspectives of writing in support of reading and reading in the service of writing
- the timely, much needed look at the reading-writing-technology interface
- the guidance provided for text and task selection as well as implementation of particular assignments or activities for differing levels of proficiency
- and, finally, the road map to professional enrichment offered in this volume’s extensive bibliography of reading-writing literature compiled with an eye toward the needs of teachers of multilingual learners

It will be readily apparent to readers of this volume that voices that should be heard in a book such as this are present throughout—voices not only from L1 and L2 literacy research
circles but also from the classroom, including Hirvela’s own teacher-researcher voice and student voices, that, though not immediately audible, are indirectly “heard” through an array of model teacher-student literacy task interactions. Teachers of L2 literacy who are committed to or simply interested in efficaciously connecting reading and writing instruction should feel that this is a book that speaks to and for them.

References


Diane Belcher,
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