

Introduction

An illuminating experience in the professional lives of many L2 writing teachers is the recognition that their students' difficulties while writing in the L2 are not necessarily, or not predominantly, writing problems per se. Upon closer examination, they can often be traced to problems in reading. At the postsecondary level, especially, where, as Carson and Leki (1993b) note, "reading can be, and in academic settings nearly always is, the basis for writing" (p. 1), students' ability to write is heavily dependent upon and influenced by their ability to read. Here "ability to read" signifies not only skill in reading for the comprehension of meaning, but also being able to use reading as a means of better understanding how to *use* texts. For example, academic writing often requires incorporating material from source texts—statistics, ideas, quotations, etc.—into a text being written. This process involves a complex balance of reading and writing skills. Students who read well know where to locate and how to identify the most relevant content in the source texts, and that knowledge can help them anticipate how, as writers, to relocate the relevant source material within a text they're producing.

At the same time, good readers don't just comprehend texts well; they also learn about writing through their reading of them. For instance, reading provides meaningful exposure to rhetorical strategies, cohesive devices, and other common elements of academic writing. In other words, the texts provide valuable input about writing. Acquiring such knowledge from

reading should eventually assist students while writing by equipping them with helpful knowledge of writing strategies and techniques. It is this kind of scenario that has inspired such oft-made comments as “good writers are good readers” and “good readers are good writers.” Conversely, “poor writers may be poor readers,” in that they are unable, as readers, to successfully process or make use of source texts, leaving them ill-prepared for the act of writing about those texts because their reading has not effectively informed their writing.

Though L2 writing instructors may intuitively sense that there are important connections between the acts of reading and writing as they arrive at the understanding just described, they are not necessarily prepared to fully appreciate or recognize the various relationships that exist between the two skills, such as the key idea that writing and reading depend upon many of the same composing processes. For one thing, it’s easy to conceptualize the writing course as just that: a course about *writing*. As Kroll (1993), among others, has pointed out, reading has traditionally been seen as a skill to be taught separately from writing, as well as something students are somehow expected to already know about when they reach the writing course. As such, teaching reading in a writing course may seem like an odd idea, if not an entirely unnecessary one. It may also be the case that L2 writing teachers feel ill-prepared to teach reading, especially in connection with writing. How many have actually been taught to teach reading, let alone the two skills together? They may also feel that teaching writing is hard enough as it is, and that adding reading to the equation will make the task too difficult to perform well. Then there’s the time factor. Writing classes are busy places with no room to spare; where will pedagogical space be found to incorporate reading into the mix? That’s a question many teachers are likely to ask—even if they accept the premise that discussing reading with writing is a good idea.

Although the situation has changed to some extent in the current century, thanks especially to the emergence of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and its emphasis, in writing courses, on source-based writing that involves both reading

and writing, as well as deep interest in the general notion of academic literacy, the reading side of the equation is still a difficult one to account for. How much class time should be allocated to reading? How, specifically, should reading be treated? How can connections to writing be demonstrated in meaningful ways? These are challenging questions that EAP writing teachers face when trying to incorporate reading into their instructional practices, and difficulties encountered when attempting to answer them may well result in reading being shortchanged. Thus, even if one embraces the idea of reading-writing connections, promoting those connections in a writing class is much easier said than done.

A very different kind of problem we need to consider is that our notions of reading and writing need to be changed in line with rapid advances in technology. Historically speaking, “reading” meant engaging print or hard copy sources—books, newspapers, magazines, etc. And that, in turn, meant reading in a linear way—start from the beginning and work systematically to the end. Indeed, print-based texts were easily marked by a beginning, middle, and ending, a design feature not necessarily present in screen-based texts. “Writing” meant using a pen or pencil or typewriter to record one’s words, and the composing process may well have been linear as well, especially with no simple “cut and paste” options like those that computer software provides.

Today we can no longer assume that these print-oriented approaches and materials are the ones students use when they read and write. Instead, we need to account for online, or screen-based, reading and writing, as students’ encounters with reading and writing may well be based in cyberspace. In many countries, it is now the case that students turn to the internet for sources of information and to a computer to write their essays. What, then, does it mean to say that we “read” an electronic document that may contain various links to other texts and operate in a non-linear nature (where there is no clear-cut beginning, middle, or ending)? What does the word *write* mean when it involves, say, authoring a webpage or homepage, or recording words via a phone? The most reasonable answer

to these questions is that terms like *reading* and *writing* don't necessarily mean what they once did; one does not read or write an electronic text the way he or she reads print-based articles and essays. And yet reading and writing are taking place. Students are still *composing* meaning. But how the composing processes are enacted when the textual environments they take place within are electronic in nature may vary considerably from conventional acts of reading and writing.

The issues identified are important ones for us because we live increasingly in a world of electronic or online literacy, and the academic work our students perform in many courses may involve electronically based reading and writing. That being so, students need our help in learning how to successfully complete these tasks—tasks that are still in the process of being defined and understood because of (a) the relative newness of the world of electronic literacy and (b) the dynamic, ever-changing nature of that world as technology undergoes constant upgrades. Meanwhile, students still require the ability to read and write as those skills have long been practiced—that is, in the world of print literacy. Thus, we, as L2 writing teachers, find ourselves in a complex in-between time with respect to second language academic literacy, one in which we may need to teach both print and screen or online literacy skills. Though the pendulum has, in many places, shifted heavily to a world of electronically mediated texts, the world of print-based texts has not gone away.

At present, then, L2 writing teachers are faced with perhaps unprecedented challenges as we straddle the worlds of print and electronic literacy and attempt to link reading and writing within these domains. At the same time, though, we face unprecedented opportunities as well. Because of advances in technology, in particular—for example, the wider accessibility to computers and to an ever-richer internet—our students can do more with reading and writing than was possible in the past.

The primary purpose of this book is to bridge the past and present (and future) by looking closely at what we know about reading and writing connections and what we, as teachers, can do with them as we engage this complicated interface between

old and new ways of reading and writing. The book tries to put past and present reading-writing connections knowledge and practices in perspective in ways that will serve the interests of a wide range of practitioners and researchers: those who have not yet embraced the notion of vital links between reading and writing, those who are still learning about those links and wish to know more, and those well acquainted with such links who seek to refresh and perhaps expand their understanding of them.

Chapter 1 creates a framework for the chapters that follow by reviewing major conceptualizations of reading-writing connections, particularly in the L2 context. The chapter shows how this field has evolved and lays out its foundations.

Chapter 2 addresses the topic of source-based writing, where much of contemporary reading-writing connections scholarship is located, at least in the academic literacy context, with a particular interest in two primary directions for reading-writing connections in which source-based writing is enacted: from reading to writing and from writing to reading, with a concentration on the former. While doing so, the chapter looks at such important topics as summarizing, synthesizing, using citations, and plagiarism.

Chapter 3 looks at a topic that has received relatively little direct attention in the reading-writing connections literature: the role of transfer. In reading for writing, for example, the writer must *transfer* material read into the text being written. This is not a simple or automatic process. The movement of material from the text it was originally located in—the source text—to the written text under construction comprises a complex set of procedures that are in fact acts of transfer. The chapter reviews various conceptualizations of transfer and discusses their applications to reading-writing connections.

Chapter 4 explores a relatively new dimension of reading-writing connections: the use of those connections in the world of assessment, as in the case of the integrated test tasks now found in the TOEFL®. Writing ability, in particular, is now increasingly assessed in connection with reading, since, in academic contexts, much writing takes place in partnership with reading.

In these circumstances, it makes far more sense to examine the writer's ability to read source texts and transfer material from them into their writing. The chapter reviews the assessment literature that has emerged recently and discusses implications of that scholarship for reading-writing connections pedagogy.

Chapter 5 closes the book by focusing more extensively and intensively on pedagogical issues by presenting several major models of reading-writing connections instruction that can be employed in the L2 writing classroom. This chapter equips readers with a range of options to work from in shaping their own reading-writing pedagogy.

A recurring theme in the current professional literature and at conferences is the need to help L2 writers acquire an appropriate level of academic literacy knowledge and ability. Reading and writing and the ways in which they interact in academic settings are crucial elements in this acquisition. The approach taken in this book is intended to assist L2 writing instructors in understanding the issues and challenges they face in the process of trying to develop students' L2 academic literacy skills, both electronically and print-based, and in establishing the vital instructional link between reading and writing that may still be lacking in many classrooms. While to some teachers and researchers the idea of treating reading and writing together may seem not only logical but unavoidable, it may be the case that there remains an emphasis on the traditional skills-separation model of L2 teaching in which reading and writing are taught independently of each other or are juxtaposed against each other rather than treated as partners in literacy. It may also be the case that many L2 writing instructors are still in the process of learning how to account for the dual worlds of print and online reading and writing that students and teachers must face, not ignore, in the new landscape of academic literacy that we are traversing early in the 21st century. Hopefully, this book will help those teachers undergoing that process. At the same time, the book endeavors to help potential or active researchers of reading-writing connections with information that can be used in developing new studies of those connections.