

#4 Writing



Guiding Principle

Writing can contribute to building almost every kind of inner control of literacy learning that is needed by a successful reader...and yet there may be no predictable sequence in which the shifts in control can occur! (Clay, 2001, p. 12)

When we speak or when we listen to speech we are constructing and composing. When we write down a phrase, message or story we are constructing and composing. When we read what someone else has written we are constructing and composing. These three activities draw upon language knowledge in similar ways. (Clay, 2005, p. 50)

When the child composes the 'message' that he will write . . . it is about

- going from ideas in the head
- to spoken words
- to printed message
- and finding out that you can construct those messages.

(Clay, 2005, p. 51)

A Little Background

"Writing" as a topic brings many aspects of the process to our minds.

Are we talking about the conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, hand-writing? Are we talking about composing and writing messages? Are we talking about style?

In this toolkit, the emphasis is on supporting children as they compose and write their own stories or texts. It is also about building a known writing vocabulary, hearing and recording sounds in words, constructing words from their parts, and using analogy to construct new words. "It is about shifting from simple sentences at first to complex sentences later, and about using a variety of ways to structure sentences, and packing more interest into the message" (Clay, 2005, p. 50). The RRCNA resources listed later in the toolkit offer many ideas for supporting children as they become writers throughout the elementary years.

We know that children need massive opportunities to read and write continuous text. And we know that support for the reciprocal relationships between reading and writing has research documentation.

In short, writing allows a slow analysis of detail in print; both reading and writing draw on the same sources of knowledge about letters, sounds, chunks, clusters, words, syntax (or grammar and sentence construction); the rules of discourse, and narrative structures and genre differences; gains in reading may enrich writing and vice versa; and dipping into a large pool of both reading and writing knowledge will help those with limited knowledge of the language, and may have cognitive advantages. (Clay, 1998, p. 139 or Clay, 2014, p. 154)

During your experience with this toolkit, you will want to return to specific parts of *Promising Literacy for Every Child: Reading Recovery and a Comprehensive Literacy System, Second Edition* (RRCNA, 2022), referred throughout this document as the Guide. Suggestions are provided in the next section.

Professional Learning Toolkits

are an extension of *Promising Literacy for Every Child: Reading Recovery and a Comprehensive Literacy System, Second Edition* (RRCNA, 2022), referred throughout this document as the Guide. Be sure to read "An Introduction to RRCNA Professional Learning Toolkits" prior to using this specific toolkit.

Intended Participants

This toolkit is appropriate for classroom teachers, coaches, interventionists, EB teachers, literacy specialists, and administrators.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit provides a wide range of resources available through RRCNA. The leader(s) of your professional learning community will want to choose resources that meet the needs of teachers and children in your context. You will, of course, want to include other resources available to you to enrich the experience. In order to get the most from this toolkit, consider the following suggestions.

► Initial Session(s)

The following resources are suggested as possible initial activities for the group.

Self-Assessment

1. Go to page 16 in the Guide and examine your essential beliefs relative to supporting students during the process of writing continuous text. Share perspectives.
2. Go to pages 33–35 in the Guide and discuss your assessment of current classroom practices related to writing.
3. Go to pages 38–39 in the Guide and discuss your assessment of current assessment and progress monitoring tools that relate to writing.
4. Go to pages 42–44 in the Guide to discuss your assessment of interventionists' current practices that relate to writing.

Discussion

Based on your self-assessment, did you identify some areas for exploration as a learning community? Set goals for your learning and make a plan for accomplishing those goals.

Reading

To stimulate inquiry, ask one or two members of the group to read one of the following articles or book chapters and share with the group, inviting conversation among the learning community.

Clay, M. M. (1998, 2014). The power of writing in early literacy. *By different paths to common outcomes*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (This chapter is in both editions of the book.)

Clay, M. M. (2001). Extra power from writing in early literacy interventions. *Change over time in children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (Chapter 1 in the book)

Gibson, S. A. (2008). An effective framework for primary-grade guided writing instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(4), 324–334

► Subsequent Sessions

Preview the list of RRCNA resources and decide which ones will be useful for your learning community. You may wish to use a jigsaw arrangement for resources you select. Instead of a session planned for the whole group, individuals or small groups may work together on selected activities with various resources and then bring information back to share with the larger group.

► Application of Learning

A crucial aspect of community learning is for participants to apply what they learn in their own settings and to share with others in the professional learning community. Think about ways to measure changes in your learning as well as changes in student learning. For example, if participants explore writing assessments or teaching practices introduced through the RRCNA resources, they will want to share their experiences with colleagues.

► Final Session(s)

Return to the goals you set for your explorations of writing during the initial session. Take time to evaluate the learning experiences and set goals for future learning and applications.

RRCNA RESOURCES FOR USE IN PLANNING SESSIONS

Effective Literacy Practices Video

Learning About Phonology and Orthography

This short video focuses on learning about the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language. Through reading and writing continuous texts, children learn about sound-symbol relationships, they take on known reading and writing vocabularies, and they can use what they know about words to generate new learning.

On-Demand Webcasts (available for RRCNA members only)

Guided Writing: Teaching with Power and Purpose

Jan Richardson

Guided writing is a small group approach to writing instruction that targets a specific skill or strategy students need to learn. Topics include analyzing writing samples to identify a focus strategy, creating powerful mini-lessons, and providing appropriate scaffolds and prompts that help students accelerate.

Flexibility in Problem Solving During Writing

Mary Fried

Insights from Marie Clay, student samples, and video segments are provided to demonstrate over time in writing, the value of variety in writing, and examples of information narrative writing. (Although this webcast is intended for Reading Recovery professionals, it has implications for teachers of young children.)

Audio Files (available for RRCNA members only)

Reading Recovery and Classroom Writing (RR/Grade 1)

Adria Klein (2014)

Common Core Standards set the expectations for students to write using evidence from literary and informational texts. Explore links between writing in Reading Recovery and first grade classrooms.

Creating a Strong Community of ELL Writers (K-2)

Stella Villalba (2012)

Learn how to integrate author studies and mentor texts in a writing workshop framework to raise strong writers with English language learners in early grades. Videos and books are shared.

Bringing Nonfiction Writing to Life in Your Classroom

Tony Stead (2011)

Discover proven instructional strategies for teaching students to become effective writers of nonfiction. Learn how to teach your students to be 'real writers' for 'real purposes.' Includes planning and managing your writing program, linking with content studies, and giving children a writing structure.

Nurturing Young Writers

Matt Glover (2011)

Young children are capable of incredible thinking, which can be seen in their writing, when they see themselves as writers and when adults honor children's approximations of writing. Using video and writing samples, learn how these beliefs translate into instructional practices in early childhood classrooms. Practical and developmentally appropriate strategies are provided.

Getting the Most Out of Interactive Writing

Ruth Roth and others (2009)

Review components of the interactive writing lesson and look closely at the importance and benefits of the composing stage. Many writing samples are used to discuss the writing process.

Traveling Across the Writing Workshop

Kathi Hoover (2008)

A tour through a year of writing workshop includes stops to visit study units. We unpack our backpacks and share supplies, mini-lessons, and texts needed for a successful writing workshop adventure.

Opportunities for Responding: Guided Reading and Written Response

Jeffery Williams (2008)

One often neglected opportunity of guided reading is teaching about and scaffolding for writing in response to reading. Explore methods of teaching, engaging and supporting young readers in quality written response as an integral part of small-group, guided reading instruction.

Creating Successful Writers with Mentor Tasks

Rose Capelli and Lynne Dorfman (2008)

Learn ways to use literature to support students in making reading/writing connections. Activities for developing the traits of writing with literature models are shared, and the importance of teacher as writer is emphasized and modeled.

Creating Contexts for Meaningful Independent Reading and Writing

BethAnn Browning (2007)

Learn how to develop and implement meaningful, independent literacy work during reading workshop. Videos show children in Grades K-2 engaged in exploration and practice. Implementation plan provided.

The Art and Science of K-1 Writing Demonstrations

Terry Botsford (2007)

Examine daily opportunities to show K-1 students the skills and thought processes of a writer. Examples of growth over time illustrate the effectiveness of this approach.

Informational Books and Writing: Making the Connection

Evelyn Freeman (2006)

Recent informational books that represent various formats such as ABC, counting, diaries and others are shared. Suggestions for using these books as models for children's writing are presented.

Teaching for Strategies in a Reading/Writing Workshop

Mona Yoast-Bertino (2006)

When we focus classroom instruction on teaching FOR strategy use, powerful reading/writing connections can be made. Identify strategies that support and connect the reading and writing process, and model ways to teach FOR these strategies.

Reading and Writing Nonfiction in the Primary Grades

Adria Klein (2006)

Effective instructional practices including shared reading, guided reading, and interactive writing using nonfiction texts are demonstrated for implementation in primary classrooms.

Kindergarten Literacy: The Power of Writing (K-2)

Christy Moore and Sharon Buchanan (2016)

What kind of power does writing have on reading? Looking at research and classroom practice, learn how improved writing instruction has the potential to improve the reading abilities of kindergarten students.

Guys DO Read and Write: Fostering a Boy-Friendly Classroom (3-6)

Scott Jones (2015)

Do your boy students dread the daily literacy block? Explore research-based strategies and resources that focus on methods to help motivate boys to view themselves, and flourish, as literate citizens.

Journal Articles (click titles to open/download)

- Askew, B. J., & Frasier, D. (1998). [Early writing: An exploration of literacy opportunities](#). *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, 4(1), 43–66.
- Bodrova, D., & Leong, D. J. (1998). [Scaffolding emergent writing in the zone of proximal development](#). *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, 3(2), 1–18.
- Boocock, C., McNaughton, S., & Parr, J. M. (1998). [The early development of a self-extending system in writing](#). *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, 3(2), 41–58.
- Clay, M. M. (2004). [Talking Reading, and Writing](#). *The Journal of Reading Recovery*, 3(2), 1–15.
- Kamberelis, G. (1998). [Relations between children's literacy diets and genre development: You write what you read](#). *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, 3(1), 7–53.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Articles

- Gibson, S. A. (2008). An effective framework for primary-grade guided writing instruction. *The Reading Teacher*, 62(4), 324-334.
- Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (2016). A path to better writing. *The Reading Teacher*, 69(4), 359-365.
- Roth, K., & Dabrowski, J. (2014). Extending interactive writing into grades 2-5. *The Reading Teacher*, 68(1), 33-44.
- Van Sluys, K. & Laman, T. T. (2006). Learning about language: Written conversations and elementary language learners. *The Reading Teacher*, 60 (3), 222-233.

Books

- Dorn, L. J., & Soffos, C. (2001). *Scaffolding young writers: A writer's workshop approach*. York, ME: Stenhouse.
- Laminack, L.L. (2007). *Cracking open the author's craft: Teaching the art of writing*. New York: Scholastic. Laminack, Lester L., & Wadsworth, Reba M. (2015). *Waters are readers: Flipping reading instruction into writing opportunities*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- McCarrier, A., Pinnell, G. S., & Fountas, I. C. (2000). *Interactive writing: How language and literacy come together, K-2*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ray, K. W., & Cleveland, L. B. (2004) *About the authors: Writing workshop with our youngest writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ray, K. W., & Glover, M. (2008). *Already ready: Nurturing writers in preschool and kindergarten*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Scharer, P. L., & Pinnell, G. S. (eds). (2008). *Guiding K-3 writers to independence: The new essentials*. Columbus, OH: The Literacy Collaborative.

Chapters in Books

- Clay, M. M. (1998, 2014). The power of writing in early literacy. In *By different paths to common outcomes*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (This chapter is in both editions of the book.)
- Clay, M. M. (2001). Extra power from writing in early literacy interventions. In *Change over time in children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. (chapter 1 in the book)

References

- Clay, M. M. (2005). *Literacy lessons designed for individuals part two: Teaching procedures*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.



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