Teaching beginners to read through writing

Sheryl A. Watchorn

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TEACHING BEGINNERS TO READ THROUGH WRITING

A Project Submitted to
The Faculty of the School of Education
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
Education: Reading Option

by

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San Bernardino, California
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Introduction

Children, exposed to a vast amount of print in our society, begin to scribble, draw, and copy letters prior to kindergarten. This tendency to write prior to formal instruction made this kindergarten teacher question whether early writing would affect beginning reading and if research would substantiate a relationship between reading and writing.

Review of the Literature

A review of the literature indicated that the few studies which have examined reading behaviors and writing behaviors do report a relationship. Writing behaviors are the organizers of reading behaviors. Children who learn to write at the same time as they learn to read discover that reading and writing are related with meaning and use; that print is not a mystery. Research also supports that young children believe they can write, are developmentally ready to write, and need writing activities to assist their beginning reading efforts. Children learn from their own
efforts of trying to write; and when writing is a meaningful experience of personal interest to them, children find their own writing easier to read and comprehend than texts with unfamiliar words and concepts.

Statement of the Problem

The responsibility to integrate writing and reading skills belongs to the teacher. Writing provides information teachers need to individualize instruction in reading and to monitor children's progress in learning basic concepts about print.

Meaningful activities for beginning readers that specifically integrate reading and writing are widely scattered. Therefore, the purpose of this project was to collect appropriate activities and to develop a resource guide to furnish kindergarten and first grade teachers easy accessibility to activities for teaching beginners to read through writing.

Results

The resulting resource guide consists of 46 activities that integrate reading and writing. The activities, categorized by approaches, provide meaningful purposes for reading and writing as they are drawn from the personal experiences and interests of the beginning reader. The activities are open-ended, failure-free, and can be tailored
to individualized instruction. Center ideas are included, as well as an evaluation tool for assessing early progress. Kindergarten and first grade teachers who use this resource guide will find numerous activities under one cover for teaching their beginners to read through writing.
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"Is there a relationship between early writing and learning to read?" This is one question that has emerged within the past ten years. Generally, language arts studies link reading to listening and writing to speaking, rather than reading and writing to each other. Wilson (1981) offered the following explanation:

One assumption...is that writing is an outgrowth of reading, so reading must occur before writing can begin. Most elementary reading programs, in fact, are based on this sequence, yet...evidence suggests that this sequence is not necessary and perhaps not desirable (pp. 896-897).

Children themselves demonstrate this evidence of writing before reading. For even as young as two or three years of age, they begin drawing and scribbling with writing utensils. Exposed to a very print-oriented society of store signs, road signs, billboards, product labels, television advertising, newspapers, magazines, books, and educational television such as Sesame Street; these preschoolers gradually begin to copy objects and letters before formal instruction. DeFord (1980) commented that it is the "initial encounters with visible language...the situational
cues and an appropriate meaningful context that aids the child in organizing this print environment" (p. 158).

Bissex (1980) observed that five-year-olds are absorbed in naming their world by naming its parts; they extend this naming through writing of labels, captions, and signs.

This vast exposure to print and tendency to write prior to kindergarten made this kindergarten teacher question whether early writing would affect beginning reading. Is there research substantiating a relationship between writing and reading, or is this just another educational trend without documentation?

In her studies, Durkin (1966) found that "for more than half of early readers, interest in learning to print developed prior to or simultaneously with an interest in learning to read" (p. 137).

So if early readers generally write, what about children who find learning to read very difficult? Clay (1975) stated that research in the field of remedial reading indicated that children who fail in reading almost always have little or no writing skills. From this, she hypothesized that these children are unable to analyze print in any organized manner. Thus, Clay answered the question "How can the child write words until he can read them?" with the following point of view:

"How can the child read words until he can direct his attention in systematic ways?" If a writing
programme fosters the development of self-direction in locating, exploring and producing appropriate analysis of printed forms then one is tempted to say "How can any child...learn to read until he can write some words?" (p. 74).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is an abundance of research on reading and writing, and most of it tends to measure reading achievement with writing ability after one has already learned how to read. Stotsky (1983) cited several studies done on high school students or college freshmen that consistently showed that better writers tend to be better readers.

However, the newest correlational studies have examined the behaviors during the reading or writing process. Stotsky (1983) stated that "very little research in reading has examined the influence of writing instruction or writing activity on the development of reading comprehension" (p. 627). The few studies that have examined reading behaviors and writing behaviors do report a linkage.

Links between Reading and Writing

Having observed young children very busy with written language long before formal instruction, Clay (1975) found the following:

For children who learn to write at the same time as they learn to read, writing plays a significant part in the early reading process.... Especially when an analytic approach is taken to early
reading instruction and sentences are analysed into words which are further analysed into letters or sounds, then writing provides a complementary synthetic experience where letters are built into words which make up sentences (p. 70).

The following are certain generative skills used in early writing that are very necessary in early reading:

1. How to attend and orient to printed language.
2. How to organize one's exploratory investigation of printed forms.
3. How to tell left from right.
4. How to visually analyse letters and words.
5. What to study in a word so as to be able to reproduce it.
6. How to direct one's behaviour in carrying out a sequence of movements needed in writing words and sentences (Clay, 1975, p. 75).

Another linkage between reading and writing is given by Goodman and Goodman (1983) in this statement: "Readers need not write during reading. But writers must read and reread during writing" (p. 591). Atwell (1983) explained this process.

Authors can proceed fluently through the process of producing text but, at some point, this movement may stop as the writers become the readers of the text. They may do this in order to generate more text, to reformulate a part of the message, reword, check for consistency, or simply to hear the discourse. When the purpose has been met, the reader once again writes. Although it is seldom discussed this way, reading is as recursive as writing. It is quite natural for readers to pause, reread, or scan ahead or back and then continue reading the text (p. 27).

Watson (1983) also supported this premise.

If children become authors as they become readers, they discover through experience that writing and reading are related with meaning and use as the
link between them. To children who learn the processes simultaneously, print is no mystery and requires no manipulation to be understood. Authors are the first readers of their own work (p. 68).

Thus, in the child's early contact with written language, "writing behaviours seem to play the role of organizers of reading behaviours" (Clay, 1975, p. 3).

**Developmental Stages**

The writing data collected over the last several years by Chomsky (1971), Clay (1975), DeFord (1980), Graves (1981), and Harste, Burke, and Woodward (1981) suggests that children develop strategies and concepts from writing that lead them to reading. Condensed, these developmental stages are the following: 1) scribbling and drawing, 2) copying objects and letters, 3) writing simple sentences with invented spellings, and 4) the ability to read.

Graves (1981) expressed the following:

Against the "superstition" that children must learn to read before being allowed to write..., 90% of the children come to school believing they can write, whereas only 15% believe they can read" (p. 9).

Chomsky (1971) stated that children are developmentally ready to write before reading and felt that introduction to print should be through writing. "Children ought to learn to read by creating their own spellings for familiar words as a beginning" (p. 296). Clay, DeFord, Graves, and
Harste et al. shared this opinion with Chomsky. All of them encouraged the natural invented spellings of children. They reported that taking risks helps children explore and broaden their developing concepts. Harste et al. (1981) explained that at this point "experimenting is more important than 'correctness'" (p. 486), and a natural stage of development.

DeFord (1980) summed it up as follows:

The urge to write and become increasingly more proficient so that others can "read" it is a continuing force which propels the writer on to greater and greater attempts (p. 160).

So although initial spellings may not resemble conventional spelling, research shows there is no need to worry. Spelling will improve with time through practice and experience.

Clay (1975) also commented that for most five-year-olds who still need the kinesthetic reinforcement to learn visual perception which is necessary for reading, the early writing activities help meet this need.

Therefore, the research supports that young children believe they can write, are developmentally ready to write, and need this type of activity to assist their beginning reading efforts.

**Early Writing Attempts**

"It appears that the child first discovers the purpose of written language in an attempt to represent meaning to himself and others..." (Birnbaum, 1980, p. 202).
Lee and Rubin (1979) found that children learn from experience.

Children acquire knowledge about writing from their own participation in writing—not from instructions.... An attempt, whatever the result, is progress over no attempt. When children show no interest in this type of activity, they are not ready to profit from it; but being aware it is going on around them may stimulate such interest (pp. 177 & 179).

In many instances, though, children find that writing or composing is easier than reading. Chomsky (1971) explained it like this:

Once the child has composed a word, he looks at it and tries to recognize it. The recognition is slow, for reading the word seems much harder than writing it. Often the child works it out sound by sound, the reverse of the process by which he wrote it, and then recognition dawns all at once (p. 298).

That writing is often easier than reading is another argument in favor of writing before reading.

The early written attempts of children help prepare them for reading.

The more opportunities children have to experience the satisfaction and the trials of structuring their own writing, the better prepared they will be for interpreting the structures of others (Lehr, 1981, p. 958).

**Meaningful Experiences**

Harste et al. (1981) pointed out that children "learn by seeing print, by watching others write, and by trying to write" (p. 487). Many children, however, have limited
exposure with no opportunity to observe reading and/or writing in the home. Since their first exposure to written language may occur in the classroom, teachers need to provide reasons for the children to want to learn how to use it. Birnbaum (1980) suggested the following:

The primary emphasis must be placed on its meaning-making functions. Children must find authentic purposes for writing.... That implies that they be allowed to write on topics that emerge from their own interests (p. 209).

Allen (1965) firmly believes in this "language experience approach." To build positive attitudes toward writing and reading and to instill confidence in their ability to master these skills, he simplistically explained concepts that children should understand about the process.

1. I can talk about what I think about.
2. What I can talk about I can communicate in some other way [writing, art].
3. Anything I record I can recall through speaking or reading.
4. I can read what I write and what other people write for me to read (p. 7).

Allen reported that "when a child is reading his own writing, the concept (or meaning) load of the reading material is reduced to zero" (p. 11). Thus, oral reading of one's own writing allows for concentration on expression and fluency with no worries about unfamiliar words or comprehension.

Critics of the language experience approach and proponents for the basal readers argue that certain words
are supposed to be taught in certain grades; that children selecting their own words will choose words too difficult for their level. Durkin (1980) countered this notion with "the fact that children are ready to learn any word that is of interest, regardless of where it happens to appear in a basal reader series" (p. 274).

When writing is a meaningful experience of personal interest to the child, then a measure of reading success is assured.

**Implications**

There are several implications regarding the relationship of writing and reading.

Since written language is learned naturally, programs which assume that the young child knows little if anything about print and which focus initial attention on more abstract systems of language (letters and words) may a) fail to allow children to access what they already know about language generally and written language specifically, and/or b) convince them that the strategies which they have used to make sense of their world do not apply in the instance to written language control (Harste et al., 1981, p. 310).

Giordano (1983) emphasizes that writing and reading must be integrated because of their mutual dependence; and the responsibility to integrate writing and reading skills must belong to the teacher. Therefore, teachers must build on what the children know, and provide open-ended activities where children and their achievements are both encouraged and recognized.
The studies of Clay (1975) and Harste et al. (1981) have shown that early writing behaviors are organized, systematic, and identifiable. Writing provides information teachers need to individualize instruction in reading and to monitor children's progress in learning basic concepts about print.

Since language is a multi-modal event (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), language users can build on the strengths they have in the other expressions, thereby "fine-tuning language with language" (Harste et al., 1981, p. 67). Goodman and Goodman (1983) supported this procedure, explaining as follows:

As writing proficiency improves through functional communicative use, there will certainly be a pay-off to reading since all of the schemata for predicting texts in reading is essentially the same as those used in constructing texts during writing (p. 591).

"Writing is a unique and powerful form of learning that serves to develop cognitive functions and that writing rather than reading is truly the hallmark of a literate society" (Birnbaum, 1980, p. 209).

**Conclusion**

Research literature seems to acknowledge a definite and positive relationship between reading and writing. This presents a challenge to teachers of beginning readers to find purposeful activities that integrate reading with writing.
CHAPTER III

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The search to find meaningful activities for beginning readers that specifically integrate reading and writing was a tedious one. After careful examination of several language arts books, this teacher did not find any one book she felt was satisfactory. Most books had an entire section on reading and a section on writing, but only an activity or two (if any) combining the two.

Therefore, this project consisted of collecting activities which integrate reading with writing and putting them together in a resource guide. The activities selected are meaningful, open-ended, failure-free, and able to be tailored to individualized instruction. Categorized by approaches, this resource guide furnishes kindergarten and first grade teachers easy accessibility to appropriate activities for teaching beginners to read through writing.
CHAPTER IV

TEACHING BEGINNERS TO READ THROUGH WRITING

Integrating the teaching of reading with writing has educational implications.

A successful writing curriculum will be one that builds on personal writing, builds the functions of interpersonal writing, and helps pupils to find frequent real purposes for such writing with real audiences. A successful reading curriculum involves pupils in an awareness of the role of the author.... Through engaging in a large amount of varied reading and writing, children will develop a sense of control over them and will find a personal significance for becoming literate (Goodman & Goodman, 1983, pp. 592 & 599).

This resource guide has been designed to fill a void for teachers of beginning readers who want to teach reading and writing simultaneously. While there are numerous reading activities and writing activities enumerated in other books, only an activity or two (if any) integrating reading and writing are mentioned. This work presents numerous activities under one cover in a concise and rapidly accessible form.

This resource guide consists of 46 activities which are drawn from the personal experiences and interests of the beginning reader, thus providing meaningful purposes for integrating reading with writing. The activities are
open-ended, failure-free, and can be tailored to individualized instruction. Included in this resource guide are language experience stories, making theme booklets, and reading/writing center ideas. Some other selections cover name writing, retelling a story, pattern writing, writing sentences incorporating new vocabulary words, work charts, letter writing, and polls.

For organization, activities have been categorized by approaches. The eight categories are as follows:
1) environmental print, 2) teacher modeling, 3) creative writing, 4) booklet making, 5) pattern activities, 6) charts and lists, 7) correspondence activities, and 8) the reading/writing center.

At the end of the guide is an evaluation tool devised by Clay (1975) to estimate the level of a young child's early progress in the first six months of instruction.

This resource guide is not intended to be a beginning reading program with sequential skills and specific vocabulary. Rather, it was this author's purpose to assemble an assortment of activities that a) integrate reading and writing, b) can use the children's own written language as their instructional reading text, and c) can be presented in any order.

Great care has been taken in the selection of activities. Written tasks presented here have been chosen for their
instructional usefulness in teaching reading, their meaning-making functions, and flexibility. The activities are also open-ended and failure-free: when building upon what the child knows, there are no wrong answers. To insure that each child enjoys freedom of expression without any fear of failure; encourage, accept, and recognize all efforts. Items have even been screened to match the capabilities of the beginning reader; therefore, activities such as keeping a diary or taking lecture notes have been omitted due to their advanced nature.

Explanations of activities are general; specific examples are given only for clarification. Items are not footnoted as each appears in two or more references listed in the bibliography. Actual lesson plans are not provided in order to allow teachers creative flexibility and the opportunity to tailor tasks to the instructional needs of their own students.

Environmental Print

Children learn by seeing print. Today's children have been exposed to many words in their environment. Pointing out familiar words and posting words in the classroom where they can be seen every day extends the children's exploration of their world and begins the investigation into the purposes of printed forms. The following five activities
focus on words as a means of identifying people, places, and objects in the environment.

**Signs at School**

After a walk around the school pointing out words that identify the various rooms, such as "Girls" and "Boys" restrooms, "Office," "Room 3," "Exit," "Library," etc.; the teacher writes on the board the words read on the walk that the children remember seeing. Make construction paper doors letting each child choose whatever sign he can read to write on his door. Children may copy from the board, with teacher assistance if necessary.

**Product Labels**

As a homework assignment, children bring items to class with product labels on them that they can read. Examples are: Cheerios box, Pepsi can, Hershey's candy bar, McDonald's cup, Tonka truck, Hello Kitty purse, etc. Children can paint a picture of their items, including their labels.

**Names**

One of the most important words a child will initially learn to read and write is his own name. It is essential that each child's name be posted for him to see and recognize in his class environment. Put names on tags to wear and on cards to identify desks, coat hooks, supplies, etc. When children write their names on their paperwork,
those who have not mastered printing their name can either
trace their name card on their desk or copy from it.

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards provide an excellent opportunity to
introduce and post words. Pictures should be either
labelled or captioned with complete sentences. For example,
a bulletin board displaying pictures that begin with the
letter "D" should have the word identifying each picture
either on it or beside it. Have the children assist with
the labelling as much as possible, especially if it's a
name to identify someone's good work.

Classroom Labels

Label objects in the classroom (desk, flag, sink, wall,
etc.) as these words come up in discussions, stories, or
compositions. Write the word on the board and have a child
write the label card to tape to the object. The classroom
thus becomes a living dictionary with words constantly being
impressed on young minds. Let your environment come alive
with print.

Teacher Modeling

Children learn by watching others write. Therefore, it
is very important for the teacher to model writing and
demonstrate meaningful purposes for writing. When the
teacher is modeling writing in front of the class or
individuals, she should call attention to the following reading/writing skills as she writes: unusual words, words beginning with the same sound, letter sounds and spelling, letter names, capitalization, punctuation, spacing between words, and left to right progression. This oral instruction during the writing keeps the children actively participating and focusing on cues to assist them in reading.

Scribe

One purpose for writing is to record one's thoughts; these thoughts can be recalled by reading. In the early months of reading/writing instruction when most children lack the ability to handwrite legibly, the teacher can become a scribe. The scribe prints the child's thoughts for him. The result is a legible recording of the child's own language that he can read and reread. The teacher can scribe for the whole class in a group discussion or for an individual.

When scribing for an individual, use a light colored marker so the child can trace in pencil over your printing afterwards. As his handwriting matures, leave space between the lines instead so he can copy the message himself below your printing.

Morning News

The morning news gives the teacher an opportunity with a purpose to begin each day with a reading/writing activity.
On the board in complete sentences record such information as the date, weather, attendance, and special events. Then have individuals or the whole class read the morning news.

Writing Directions

Another purpose for writing is to explain how to do something. Directions indicate what, how, and in what sequence tasks should be done. Following directions is such an essential reading skill that teachers need to provide written, along with oral, directions for assignments. Even beginning readers can read written directions with the aid of pictorial symbols, such as: color, cut, write, paste, read.

Silent Exercise

In odd moments, perhaps while waiting for slow workers to finish, a teacher can hold a "silent" reading/writing exercise to see if children can read the teacher's thoughts. On a large paper the teacher writes about anything. For example: "I see something. It is on the floor. It is red. Is it a crayon? No. It's a red pencil." Any child who can read aloud the silent written communication can take it home.

Creative Writing

Children learn to write by writing. Most of them have probably been scribbling and copying letters and objects for the past two to four years. Because of this background in
writing, Graves (1983) states that 90% of children believe they can write when they enter school. So let them write! Since research supports that the next stage of development after copying letters is invented spellings during composing, teachers should encourage and accept children's initial attempts to record their own thoughts independently. The following eight activities suggest various modes for encouraging creative expression. The written products provide excellent text for oral reading due to the child's familiarity with the words and concepts therein.

**Word Inventory**

One of the first reading/writing exercises should be to give out plain unlined paper, crayons, and pencils. Direct each child to write all the words he knows. After a few minutes, suggest names of family members and friends, signs, and small words like I, a, it, yes, no, go, cat, in, etc. Afterwards, have children share their responses by reading their own lists. This inventory can be kept and re-done mid-year and at the end of the school year to show progress. It can also be used diagnostically as a core vocabulary around which individualized reading materials can be constructed.

**Language Experience Stories**

Language experience stories are the real heart of creative expression in the first year of instruction. The
initiating experience can come from a book, field trip, film, class discussion, unit of study, or a painting. The teacher becomes the scribe for the child by writing his every word. When the story is complete, have the child read it back. Assist when necessary. Then the child can trace or copy the story and illustrate it also, if desired. Share these stories with the class. Better yet, if the child can read his story himself, have him read it before the class. This establishes reading and writing as communication, as well as presenting another author's ideas and language.

Captions for Paintings

Although a painting may be worth a thousand words, a language experience story is not always necessary. The story may be verbally told in its entirety, but the child may caption his masterpiece with only a word or perhaps a sentence which states the main idea. Have the child read the caption on his work of art.

Hobby or Special Interest

If a child has a hobby or special interest, creative writing is his opportunity to share his favorite subject with others. For the child who has no hobby or can't think of anything special to write about, suggest he write his favorite poem, song, nursery rhyme, jumprope jingle, joke, riddle, commercial, or cheerleading yell. Although the idea may not be original, the child still has to compose the
sentences completely from his own mind without copying. With a thorough understanding of his idea, he can concentrate on the text, reading and rereading to be sure a line is not left out.

**Wordless Picture Books**

Wordless picture books are excellent for having children create their own text to read. The plot is already there; just clip a card to each page and supply the dialogue or action. Allow opportunities for authors to share their new scripts with classmates. Books with good illustrations and meager texts can also be used by covering up the original text. Newspaper comic strips can receive new dialogue, too.

**Story Starters**

Story starters are very helpful as they lend a focus for the idea, but the finish is entirely creative. Story starters may consist of one sentence, or several paragraphs, with an unfinished ending. For example: "What if you were a little lost kitten. Tell what might happen to you."

Story starters may be very short and only begin an open-ended sentence, such as: "I like __." Children will be interested in reading and comparing the various endings.

**Roulette Story**

A group activity for creative writing is the team story or roulette story. Each member in the group contributes one sentence which the teacher writes on a large
sheet of paper. The exciting feature of this kind of story is the sudden and ever-changing twists in the action; and the more far-fetched, the better! Reread and enjoy the story together. Children may want to copy it also to keep.

**Vocabulary Sentences**

One of the most meaningful ways to remember a new vocabulary word is to write it down, especially in a sentence. As a homework assignment, each child can write his own sentences incorporating new vocabulary words of the day or week. Add an element of intrigue: the teacher secretly selects one sentence from each child's work to form the vocabulary study chart for reading group period. Children must read and try to guess which sentence is their own creation.

**Booklet Making**

A booklet can be made solely by one student, or it can be a collection of students' pages to form a class booklet. Authorship builds the author's confidence in his ability to read what he has written. It also demonstrates that books are written by people for other people to read. Booklets made in class should share equal billing with published books in the classroom library. The following activities prescribe six types of booklets that children can make to use as their reading texts.
Sequence Pictures

A four-page booklet can be easily constructed by captioning a series of sequential pictures. Activity sheets with three or four pictures sequencing an event can be cut apart, with children pasting one picture on each page in the correct order. Then children write the caption below each picture. Have children read their version to another classmate.

My Best Stories

A booklet can be a collection of stories on various topics composed by one author. Title booklet "My Best Stories" or "Stories by ___." Rereading one's best efforts develops pride in accomplishments and shows growth over a period of time.

Theme Booklets

Theme booklets consist of a collection of stories on one theme. They can evolve around a unit of study; for example, a zoo booklet featuring various animal stories or paintings of zoo animals labelled with their names. A theme booklet can be a collection of "What If" stories or "I like ___" stories. Although they can have one author, theme booklets lend themselves to class authorship allowing each student to contribute to the class booklet.

Academic Booklets

Alphabet booklets are very popular and instructionally useful at the kindergarten and first grade level. Pages
entitled "A is for ___" and "B is for ___", etc, emphasize sound/symbol relationships and can be read over and over again. Other subjects that lend themselves to academic booklets are colors, shapes, and numbers.

**Address Booklets**

An address booklet consisting of names, addresses, and phone numbers of class members gives practice in writing this important data. Each child writes or copies his own information into the booklet. This booklet becomes a reference booklet in the classroom library. Children can be encouraged to bring in their own personal address books for their classmates to complete. Looking up a friend's address to send a greeting card provides a practical and meaningful experience for reading.

**Vocabulary Dictionary**

A vocabulary booklet or personal dictionary of words one can read can be an ongoing development. Each child's dictionary is unique containing his own storehouse of vocabulary words. Having one page for each letter of the alphabet, the student will record each new word he can read on the appropriate page and use it in a sentence. Illustrations for some words may also be added. This activity introduces the concept of the dictionary without the burden of unknown words. Kept at the child's desk, it provides a handy reference for correct spelling during written exercises.
Pattern Activities

As the name "pattern" implies, these activities follow the format of the original. The five pattern activities listed here provide practice in word substitutions in phrases, sentences, and stories.

Predictable Patterns

Predictable pattern writing is an extension of literature: rewriting an entire story using the format of the original to recreate a new story. Predictable trade books and songs that have much repetition are very easily adapted for pattern writing by changing a word or phrase. Children should have read the book or sung the song several times to be familiar with its predictable pattern before rewriting it themselves. For example, the classic song "Farmer in the Dell" could be adapted as the "Teacher in the School". The teacher takes the child, who takes the librarian, who takes the cook, etc. Children can make illustrated booklets of their predictable patterns to join the originals on the library shelf.

Similes and Rhyming Phrases

Writing and illustrating similes and rhyming phrases is a simplified form of predictable patterns. The basic framework for a simile is "as ___ as ___", such as "as red as a rose"; while the format for a rhyming phrase, such as "a fish in a dish" is "a ___ in a ___". Display these
with illustrations where all can read them and a simile or rhyming phrase may appear in some child's next story!

**Restoration Exercises**

Restoration exercises are pattern activities because the basic framework of a passage, story, or conversation transcript is utilized and certain words are deleted. Any word that is grammatically correct and that makes sense can be restored. In the following example, underlined words of the original passage are restored with the words in parentheses: I have a dog (puppy). He is large (big). His colors are black (brown) and grey (white). He says "Arf arf" (woof woof). Children must understand context clues in order to generate appropriate substitutions. This activity is great for lessons on synonyms and extending vocabulary.

**Word Banks**

A word bank is patterned after a dictionary as it provides a reference for needed words. Children write their reading vocabulary words, or any other words they wish to learn to read, on slips of paper and keep them in their own small box or card file. Each child can refer to his word bank for spelling needs, or use the cards for vocabulary drill, or to practice constructing sentences. When too many words accumulate, children can a) make dividers and file words alphabetically, or b) take home five cards each week of words they have mastered.
Story Retelling

Retelling a story in one's own words patterns one's interpretation after the original; however, it is flavored by the individual's personality, language, and how he perceives the world. This activity done early in the school year will probably require a scribe. Retellings of old favorites, such as "Little Red Riding Hood" or "The Three Bears" work well for this activity. Children can read aloud their own interpretations, then discuss similarities and differences of classmates' versions. Be sure to point out how published versions of these tales differ!

Charts and Lists

Charts seem to be a standard item in most classrooms. In many cases it is admirable to have materials prepared in advance; but charts and lists that integrate reading and writing are made during the actual instruction, with the children watching, and using the children's own language input. This develops the speaking, writing, reading relationship and impresses the fact that reading is "talk written down". The following are five kinds of charts and lists and how they can be used in teaching beginners to read through writing.

Narrative Charts

Narrative charts consist of group chart stories about shared experiences, show and tell, visitors, and events.
These are excellent for re-discussions and rereading. Children may want to copy the chart story to read at home.

One example of a narrative chart is the following: Feature one student as the "Special Person of the Week." Have a small group of students dictate sentences describing the special person's appearance and something nice about that person. The teacher writes the dictated sentences while the group watches. Reread together the entire description. Post the chart in a conspicuous place that invites rereading.

Change the small group and the special person each week so all students get the opportunity to participate.

**Work Charts**

Work charts include choosing classroom helpers, developing classroom rules, planning for a field trip, following cooking recipes, recording science data, and brainstorming ideas. Here is one kind of work chart:

On a rainy day when recess is cancelled, brainstorm various games that could be held indoors instead. Write all suggestions on the work chart. Vote, and record votes on the chart. Tally votes and write a sentence that declares the winning game.

**Reading Skills Charts**

Reading skills charts include ongoing charts of vocabulary words, seasonal words, color words, number words, shape words, word families, and letters and sounds. Besides
formulating classroom charts, children can make their own chart of vocabulary words with a seasonal motif. For example, children can write their words on paper autumn leaves and paste them onto a painted tree. When they can read their own word chart, they may take it home.

Write, Spell, Read Charts

As new letters or vocabulary words are introduced, children should trace and/or write them down. To proof and review, spell and read each word a second time. The write, spell, read sequence provides the kinesthetic mode along with the visual and auditory thus helping to imprint the new letter or word on the brain. Children will also have a daily vocabulary chart to take home and read.

Lists

Writing a list finalizes and formalizes a series of decisions, thus extending memory. The written record gives the writer a sense of being in control. Lists are a function of our daily lives and a legitimate practical reading and writing activity. Be sure the children are involved in compiling the list and allow them to copy from the board, if necessary. The following are suggested lists to compile: things to do, names of class members, supplies needed for an art project, Christmas list, classification lists (words that begin with letter T), and accomplishments ("Things I Learned This Week").
Correspondence Activities

Correspondence writing is one of the most meaningful forms of integrating reading and writing skills. The writing of a letter, note, or card reinforces the reading while reducing the complexity of learning to read. Correspondence tightens the bond between the reader and the author. Listed here are five kinds of written communication.

Penpals

Children enjoy receiving "nice" notes from the teacher. Having the teacher be the child's first penpal has another advantage: the child will be able to read his first letters since the teacher can gear her response to use words she knows the child can recognize. A parent can also be a good penpal.

When the children have progressed in letter writing, perhaps a sixth grade class at the school would agree to be penpals. Each sixth grader replies to one young student's letter. Children may want to read and share notes from their penpals with their classmates.

Special Letters

Special letters can be sent to adults for various reasons. Children can write invitations to their parents regarding an Open House or a class play. Thank you letters, either group or individual, can be sent to guest speakers, or after a field trip. Letters sent to favorite authors or
the President add excitement to correspondence writing due to the anticipation and thrill of a response from a famous personality.

**Greeting Cards**

Homemade greeting cards for classmates' birthdays and get well cards for absent friends provide a meaningful and enjoyable reading/writing experience for both author and reader receiver.

**Class Newspaper**

A class newspaper to publish written stories, give results of polls, and call attention to class news activities is a more formal activity for integrating reading and writing. Children will search for topics to write on as reporters and gain necessary editing experience in polishing their articles for publication. Reading the published edition and locating their own writing may inspire future editions and the motivation for additional efforts.

**Computers**

Many computer programs require the operator to communicate by reading instructions and writing responses. Whether at school or at home, computers provide an interesting mode for students to gain and improve upon reading and writing skills.
Reading/Writing Center

The reading/writing center has activities that integrate the two skills. This is not the library corner where browsing takes place. Items to read in this center should inspire writing. A chart should list various activities that can be done in the center. Written instructions should accompany every activity. To make this center motivating, all types of writing instruments should be readily available: chalk and chalkboard, pencils, pens, markers, crayons, lined and unlined paper, typewriter, and wipe-off cards.

Inspirational Writing

Children relate the world they read about to their own experiences and dreams. Books motivate their active minds to think, dream, and reminisce. The reading/writing center can provide a special time to convey these thoughts in print. For example, the child reads a book about pets, then expresses his sentiments on paper readily available and already entitled "My Pet" or "A Pet I Would Like". Books on careers can inspire writings about "What I Want To Be When I Grow Up."

Chalkboard Writing

A chalkboard in the reading/writing center is motivational as all children like to write on the teacher's chalkboard. Children can hang up a painting and write the caption or story under it for others to read and perhaps
copy. The chalkboard can also be used as a message center with a question written by the teacher, such as: "What is your favorite animal?" Children can draw their response and label with one word or, preferably, a complete sentence.

Seasonal Writing

A chart listing special words of the month or holiday words could encourage creative stories or the reading, copying, and illustrating of the words themselves. A seasonal poem that the class has learned to recite could be posted in this center to be read, copied, and illustrated.

Typewriters

To a young child, a typewriter is mysterious and encourages exploration. Children can type their names, the alphabet in order, words they can read, or their vocabulary chart to take home and study.

Touch Box

Have a touch box in the reading/writing center. The item is enclosed within a box with an opening for a hand to reach inside and feel it. A clue card is printed on the box. For example: "I am brown and long. You use me every day. What am I?" Children read the clue, feel the object, then write their answer to the question as to what they think the item is. Post different responses for everyone to read; reveal item at the end of the day or week.
Polls

Gathering the opinions of the people around you is another method of communication. A chart or bulletin board display could poll the children about their favorite things. For example, pictures of different kinds of pets are posted. Children read the question: "Which pets would you like to have?" Children can respond in either of two ways: a) children can copy pet names on a paper and illustrate, or b) children can sign their names on the sign-up sheets under their favorite pets' pictures. Suggested items to poll are: favorite television show, food, season, toy, transportation, zoo animal, etc. Polls could also be taken on a questionnaire where children must write "yes" or "no" after reading each question.

Free Choice

The reading/writing center should also allow children the freedom to choose whatever activity they want to do, as long as it involves both reading and writing. Any of the activities previously mentioned in this resource guide are acceptable: such as writing creative stories or poems for others to read and enjoy, rereading and revising a story, copying and studying vocabulary words, or reading letters and replying to penpals.

Read This Writing!

A special corner or a bulletin board is needed to display written work where others can read it. The
reading/writing center is an excellent place to post such efforts, perhaps under a bold title exhorting everyone to "Read This Writing!" This resource guide has been concerned with providing activities for children to become personally involved in learning to read various kinds of print besides the basal reader. Their authorship needs to be praised and recognized, and their work displayed in a special place where it can and will be read.

**Evaluation Tool**

Teaching beginners to read through writing will necessitate some form of evaluation of progress. This teacher has found Clay's Rating Technique to be quite helpful in assessing early progress in reading/writing skills and for noting instructional needs.

**Rating Technique for Observing Early Progress**

To estimate the level of a young child's written expression in the first six months of instruction take three samples of his written work on consecutive days, or over a period. The child's behaviour must develop in each of three areas and he should receive a rating for each aspect of the writing task.

**Language Level:** Record the number of the highest level of linguistic organization used by the child.

1. Alphabetic (letters only)
2. Word (any recognisable word)
3. Word Group (any two word phrase)
4. Sentence (any simple sentence)
5. Punctuated story (of two or more sentences)
6. Paragraphed story (two themes)
Message Quality: Record the number below for the best description of the child's sample.
1. He has a concept of signs (uses letters, invents letters, uses punctuation).
2. He has a concept that a message is conveyed (ie he tells you a message but what he has written is not that message).
3. A message is copied, and he knows more or less what that message says.
4. Repetitive, independent use of sentence patterns like "here is a..."
5. Attempts to record own ideas, mostly independently.

Directional Principles: Record the number of the highest rating for which there is no error in the sample of the child's writing.
1. No evidence of directional knowledge.
2. Part of the directional pattern is known
   Either Start top left
   Or Move left to right
   Or Return down left
3. Reversal of the directional pattern (right to left and/or return down right). A sample with one lapse should be rated at this level.
4. Correct directional pattern.
5. Correct directional pattern and spaces between words.
6. Extensive text without any difficulties of arrangement and spacing of text.

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<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
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<tr>
<td>Probably Satisfactory</td>
<td>5 - 6</td>
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(Clay, 1975, pp. 66 & 67)
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