

Primary School Teachers Adaptations for Struggling Writers in Australia: A National Survey

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Interdisciplinary Writing Programmes: Challenge and Response

Presenting Author: Wing Sze Leung, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Instructional Design

academic writing, education, writing instruction, writing skills

First-year writing classes play a very important role in the development of undergraduate students' basic academic writing and research skills. In some institutions, students who take this foundational writing class major in different subjects, e.g., literature, architecture, biological sciences. To cater for the needs of an interdisciplinary student body, some writing programmes hire instructors from different disciplines. Therein lies the challenge. Scholars in different disciplines write their argument and teach argumentative writing differently. How should an interdisciplinary writing programme develop its classes, so that there can be sufficient commonalities between colleagues' pedagogical practices? In this paper, I am going to explain the challenges that our writing programme encountered and how we dealt with them. I teach at the honors college of the National University of Singapore. Our writing programme was originally set up by the Harvard Writing Program director in 2000. Over the years, we learned that while our humanities colleagues were very comfortable with the Harvard model, our social sciences colleagues found it inadequate and constraining. As a team, we decided to change our pedagogical approach, so that colleagues from different disciplines could have some freedom in designing their syllabus and assignment structure. However, we also made sure that students' learning experiences in our different writing classes could be consistent. In my presentation, I would like to explain how we have strived to attain that consistency by working out the commonalities between our different writing classes. These commonalities include—but are not limited to—our learning outcomes, course design principles, and lexicon.

Primary School Teachers Adaptations for Struggling Writers in Australia: A National Survey

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Teaching and Teacher Education

pedagogy and instruction, writing for specific needs, writing instruction, writing skills

Theoretical and empirical research indicates that tailoring educational practices to meet students' individual differences and needs has a positive impact on students' performance. Putting in place adaptations for struggling writers in primary education is critical since these have the potential to prevent later writing problems that lead children into needing special educational support services. Despite the critical role of instructional adaptations for students experiencing difficulties in learning to write, research investigating specific instructional adaptations that teachers typically implement for struggling writers in primary classrooms is scarce. In the current study, 298 primary teachers (88% female) from across all Australian states and territories

reported on the frequency with which they implemented instructional adaptations for struggling writers in their classrooms. They also rated their preparation and self-efficacy for teaching writing. The majority of participating teachers indicated they provided additional instruction on spelling, capitalization and punctuation, and sentence construction at least once a week or more often. Teachers further reported implementing additional minilessons and reteaching strategies and skills, as well as extra instruction on grammar, handwriting, text structure, revising and planning monthly or more often. Most teachers reported never or only once a year using adaptations to support digital writing. The frequency with which teachers provided extra instruction on spelling, handwriting, text structure, revising, and computer use differed by grade. Only teachers' perceived efficacy to teach writing made a unique and statistically significant contribution to predicting the use of instructional adaptations for writing and adaptations to support digital writing after controlling for teacher and classroom variables. Findings from this study reinforce the need of offering teachers high quality education programs and professional development opportunities for writing instruction to support them in tailoring their teaching to students who find writing particularly challenging.

Session F:3 – Oral Paper Presentation

Chair: Phillip Troutman, The George Washington University, United States

Assessing writing motivation: The influence of pictorial supports on young students' responses?

Presenting Author: Aline Alves-Wold, University of Stavanger, Norway

Co-Authors: Bente Walgermo, University of Stavanger, Norway; Njål Foldnes, University of Stavanger, Norway

Motivational, Social and Affective Processes

assessment, data visualisation, motivational and emotional factors in writing, writing beliefs

A recent systematic review of assessments of writing motivation with young students shows that an array of pictorial supports (e.g., emojis, geometrical figures, animals) is often used with Likert scales in these assessments (Alves-Wold et al., 2023). However, although these images may influence the students' responses, sufficient rationales for these choices are often absent from the studies. To the best of our knowledge, the present study is the first to investigate two different types of pictorial support (circles vs. faces - see attached file) in Likert scales assessing first and third graders' writing interest, self-concept, and self-efficacy. The samples consist of 2197 first graders (mean age 6.8 years) and 1740 third graders (mean age 8.4 years). Results from mixed linear logistic regression show statistically significant differences among the scales indicating that when face-scales are used, first-graders skip motivation items and avoid maximum values more often, and students in both grades avoid the minimum values of the scale more often (see figures 5, 6, and 7 in attached files). Gender differences are also found indicating that when face-scales are used, boys avoid the maximum values more often, and girls avoid the minimum values more often. Differences in the students' skipping behavior and endorsement