Annotated Bibliography of Research in the Teaching of English

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Twice a year, in the May and November issues, RTE publishes a selected bibliography of recent research in the teaching of English. Most of the studies appeared during the six-month period preceding the compilation of the bibliography (July through December, 1999, for the present bibliography), but some studies that appeared earlier are occasionally included. The listing is selective; we make no attempt to include all research and research-related articles that appeared in the period under review. Comments on the bibliography and suggestions about items for inclusion may be directed to the bibliography editors. We encourage you to send your suggestions to brownd@oak.cats.ohiou.edu, martino@central.murdoch.edu.au, rijlaars@ilo.uva.nl, stinsona@uwwvax.uww.edu, or mwhiting@ocean.st.usm.edu. You may also submit comments or recommend publications through the Annotated Bibliography page of RTE's World Wide Web site at http://www.ncte.org/rte/.

Bilingual/Foreign Language Education


Explores how picture books can support the literacy development of students of English as a Second Language. Uses the tools of systemic functional linguistics and the work of Kress and van Leeuwen to analyze the text-image relations in two picture books, Mrs. Wobble and The Ugly Duckling, and to compare and contrast the language and image relations in terms of their ideational function. Finds that in the first case the visual images tend to support the written text, while in the second the pictures do not represent
all the events recounted in the verbal text. Argues that the process of finding similarities and differences between the verbal and visual aspects of a text can inform a pedagogical approach that aims to develop children's strategies in remembering, retrieving, and using the language of the stories so that second language learners' involvement in literacy learning can be enhanced.


Investigates what 40 Brazilian English teachers knew about and thought of critical pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT). Uses interviews in Portuguese in which the teachers were asked about their teaching approach, their view of critical pedagogy, and the way they saw themselves politically as English teachers as well as the participants' comments on the way they related to two written passages in English, one about integrative motivation and the other about political motivation. Finds that the Brazilian teachers of English were unaware of critical pedagogy and that the few teachers concerned about pedagogy were generally former teachers of English who had abandoned teaching English in order to focus on the discourse connected to the teaching of English. Argues that unless Brazilian professors establish critical pedagogy as an effective practice that deeply transforms teachers' way of viewing the world, critical pedagogy is doomed to become just another fad in ELT.


Examines the challenges and obstacles facing four monolingual English-speaking teachers teaching to English-language learners in grades 4, 5, and 6. Uses classroom observations during language arts lessons and teacher interviews to focus on the unresolved tension between the teachers' sense that they should patiently provide students with opportunities to express ideas and thoughts in a relatively unfamiliar language and their desire for fast-paced lessons and correct English-language usage. Finds that an unfocused and unstructured language arts curriculum that provided few meaningful tools or techniques for language development exacerbated the students' poor performance in language acquisition. Argues that the reasons so many teachers retreat from meaningful, focused instruction with English-language learners is that they are not adequately supported in a professional manner by their districts.


Examines bilingual readers' use of imagery and their emotional responses while reading a narrative text in English and/or in Chinese. Uses multivariate analysis of variance to analyze the participants' reports of images and emotional responses after reading; 152 participants in three experiments were undergraduates majoring in English at Liaoning Normal University in Dalian, China. Finds that readers of the English version of the text took longer to read the narrative and reported fewer images and emotional responses than did those reading the Chinese versions and that imagery formation was present although the reports were less vivid and detailed when participants read the foreign language version (English). Argues that the three experiments support the predictions of dual coding theory and that the nonverbal representational system is a fundamental component of reading, even in a foreign language.


Investigates similarities and differences in basic processing involved in word reading of second language (L2) readers of English. Uses statistical analysis to identify correlations between Russian and Japanese low-intermediate ESL learners' performance on various cognitive and linguistic reading-related tasks. Finds that despite differences in processing strengths, neither group demonstrated
an advantage in non-word reading. Argues that the results have implications for theories of reading disability built around the notion of deficits in phonological processing.

**Classroom Discourse**


Examines the effects of teachers’ classroom practices on Aboriginal students in rural and urban schools. Uses an action research methodology, including descriptive analytical field notes, to investigate the interplay of Aboriginal students’ and teachers’ responses in the literacy classroom. Finds that many non-Aboriginal teachers have limited understanding of the notions of “shame” and “risk” and that these notions impact Aboriginal students’ literacy learning practices. Argues that Aboriginal students are disadvantaged as a result of the imposition of Standard Australian English within the context of a non-recognition and, hence, devaluing of Aboriginal English and concludes that although a positive and friendly relationship between teacher and student is necessary for effective learning in literacy classrooms, it does not guarantee success for Aboriginal students if teachers do not appreciate the differences and diversity of Aboriginal students’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

**Discourse Processes**


Explores the influences on adolescents’ perceptions and negotiations of talk about texts. Uses quantitative analysis/descriptive statistical procedures to analyze field notes, club discussions, and interviews with participants and their parents to identify the codes of power operating in adolescents’ literary discussions. Finds that students perceive after school book clubs as social outlets for trying out new positions within sanctioned literacy events involving a community of their peers. Argues that listening to adolescents’ perceptions and negotiations in informal settings can reveal codes of power that keep some individuals out of the conversation while inviting others in and calls for further research in this area with participants of more diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.


Analyzes the discourse styles of a group of African American high school students. Uses case study examples to document how both high and underachieving students' use of the “standard dialect” was "leased or rented" from nine to three when appropriate. Finds that the students were able to demonstrate their mastery of the standard dialect on exams and in classes but that they chose not to use it in their conversations with each other both in and out of the school context. Argues that the standard dialect is more than...
verbalized speech patterns in that it constitutes a contested site for self-definition, resistance, and accommodation.

Literature


Explores 22 ninth-grade students' reading engagement associated with the interpretation of a young adult multicultural novel focusing on biethnic identity development. Uses students' and researchers' reflective journals, e-mail conversations, and student research papers on the cultural authenticity of the Navajo ceremonies in the novel Heartbeat to chart the students' literacy engagement in an urban technology magnet school and a rural Hawaiian high school. Finds that students produced more personal interpretive reactions to the novel than simple descriptions of events and that students had a strong sense of agency and voice, which was supported by reader-based teaching. Concludes that students need to have opportunities to read and talk about literature that explores ethnic and cultural identity development.


Investigates the relative salience of different classes of agents in memory. Uses quantitative analysis to measure source memory as an index of agent salience in long-term memory. Finds that statement detection parameters did not significantly differ among three classes of agents and that differences in source memory could not be explained by differences in content of the speech acts, surface features of the text, differences among readers, or sophisticated guessing on the basis of a story abstract. Argues the need for research on how and how well readers track agents on other dimensions, i.e., knowing, seeing, hearing, believing, etc.

**Professional Development**


Examines the effects of children's literature with related, interactive activities on preservice teachers' opinions about multiculturalism. Uses the Inventory of Multicultural Opinions (IMO) to measure the opinions of 51 juniors and seniors enrolled in two sections of a language arts methodology course required for elementary education certification. Finds that using children's books related to selected categories of diversity along with interactive activities that require critical thinking about specific multicultural education issues may have a positive influence on preservice teachers' opinions of the addressed issues. Argues that further studies are needed that use pre-existing multicultural education attitudes and knowledge as baseline data against which the effectiveness of training efforts may be measured.


Investigates the impact of a university-public school partnership involving at-risk preschoolers and undergraduate and graduate education students. Uses a set of open-ended questions given to 26 graduate and undergraduate preservice teachers who were involved in teaching or assisting in the teaching of three-, four-, and five-year-old children to assess the value of collaboration with both the university and the school district. Finds that the preservice teachers believed that they gleaned pertinent information about preschoolers' literacy development from their authentic field experience and that the amount of time spent on-site greatly impacted the students' views. Argues that continued research is needed in the area of teacher training in terms of preparing students to deal with societal problems and learning how to provide opportunities that could enhance students' understanding of emergent literacy.

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Reading


Studies the effects of phonological awareness training on reading. Uses meta-analysis to estimate the effects of phonological awareness training on reading. Finds that experimentally manipulated phonological awareness explains about 12% of the variance in word-identification skills and that the combined effect size for long-term studies of influence of phonological awareness training on reading was much smaller. Concludes that phonological awareness is an important but not a sufficient condition for early reading.


In a longitudinal study investigates the extent to which early literacy predictors correlate with later reading success for 18 Aboriginal students. Uses Rasch analysis, correlations, and case studies to compare early literacy skills based on students’ responses to seven literacy tasks with tests given to the students four years later. Finds that four of the seven tasks completed in pre-school had a strong correlation with tasks completed four years later, that the literacy skills of this group of children were very low in comparison with their age group, and that literacy skills increased after formal literacy instruction commenced. Argues that early literacy skills are crucial to later literacy competence and that schools need to develop effective methods of teaching so that Aboriginal children may become literate as readily as non-Aboriginal children.


Explores ways of using picture books to foster a critical aesthetics. Uses readings of three recent picture books. Finds that pleasure and critical evaluation are not mutually exclusive dimensions of reading for teachers and students. Argues that picture story books through their representations of social life, history, and personal experience offer readers the opportunity to interrogate what is taken for granted or unspoken and that picture story books are aesthetic texts that are constructed in specific ways to provide readers with particular kinds of emotional, intellectual, and pleasurable experiences.


Examines the relationships between the personal, recreational reading of teachers and their use of recommended literacy instructional practices in their classrooms. Uses a questionnaire distributed to nearly 2,000 elementary school teachers focusing on their literacy programs, experiences, and practices. Finds that teachers who see themselves as readers are likely to use recommended literacy instructional practices in their classrooms and that the vast majority of surveyed elementary teachers reported reading often and enjoying books. Concludes that teachers should read personally in their lives, make time for reading, and share books with children in a variety of ways.


Explores the relationship among practice at reading, student reading performance, and organizational features of the school system. Uses quantitative analysis to measure reading practice for more than 659,000 students in grades K-12 in one school year. Finds that student reading ability was strongly positively related to amount of in-school reading practice, that time allocated in school to reading practice on self-selected materials declined after grades 5/6, that the amount of reading practice was negatively correlated with school size, and that more reading practice...
occurred in private than in public schools. Argues that higher levels of reading practice can yield higher reading achievement, especially when the practice is systematically differentiated, supported, and assessed.

Research Methodology


Discusses a theoretical framework for situating interpretations of textual data collected during research. Uses Rosenblatt's reader response theory to form the framework that consists of a continuum representing the range of interpretative assumptions researchers can bring to their reading of textual data. Finds that situating studies on a continuum offers a means of contextualizing the assumptions that researchers bring to their interpretations of data. Argues that understanding researchers' assumptions may help demystify the research process and help readers ask better questions of the research they read and conduct.

Technology and Literacy


Reports on cognitive activities of hypertext readers. Uses two groups of readers: self-regulated learners and cue-dependent learners. Finds that low-prior-knowledge students benefited more from working with the hypertext program than those with high prior knowledge. Concludes that information presentation with hypertext is most beneficial to self-regulated readers, due to their capability to use metacognitive skills and processes.


Examines the relationship between old and new technologies with Vygotskian concepts as a framework. Uses the lens of Bijker's theory of sociotechnical change to explicate data gathered in three work sites; data included field notes, textual artifacts, interviews, and audio recordings of conversations and meetings. Finds that (a) competing visions of what technology is and what it can do are operative in contemporary workplaces, (b) multiple literacy technologies are copresent in the conduct of work, and (c) advanced literacy technologies are not necessarily the most powerful within work cultures. Argues that new and more complex views of the relationship of old and new technologies are necessary if the field of composition studies is to adequately appreciate, understand, and use new literacy technologies.


Addresses the issue of macrostructural processing of multiple text passages, in particular the processes of macrostructural construction (extracting important information) and macrostructural organization (structuring selected information). Examines the effects of textual and situational factors on these processes when college students read sets of documents presented in hypertext format. Finds that headings and presentation format affect macrostructural organization, while factors such as task requirements, marking important information, and presentation order affect both processes. Concludes that comprehension of hypertext involves high levels of cognitive processing.


Explores the influence of the computer on the process of journalistic writing and the text product. Uses data collected at the workplace with Progression Analysis, an instrument combining interviews, observation, type-logging, and verbalization. Finds that incoherence of a text product, including gaps, breaks, and contradictions among words, sentences, and paragraphs, is the consequence of an inflexible repertoire of writing.
strategies that are orientated only toward copying texts on the computer. Discusses alternative strategies for computer- and source-based writing.


Explores the writing of hypertexts during regular school lessons in two parallel classes as a method to foster comprehension of the processed subject matter. Uses classroom observations, evaluations of the hypertext-documents, and learning and transfer tests. Finds that the metaphors used by the teachers in both classes to introduce the term “hypertext” influenced the discussions about the subject matter, the structures of the completed hypertext documents, and the learning outcomes. Concludes that the metaphor of hypertext as a virtual space was best suited to prompt discussions among the students when the hypertext's structures were directly related to the semantic structures of the knowledge to be taught.

Writing


Explores effects of a large university's writing intensive (WI) program by drawing upon the perceptions of upper-division students enrolled in WI classes in their majors. Uses data from extended interviews with 34 students in five degree areas: business administration (7), arts and humanities (9), mechanical engineering (2), natural sciences (6), and social sciences (10). Finds that the students reported confidence in dealing with the writing requirements of their majors because of the WI classes and that they valued research-related writing assignments as opportunities for professional skills development and identity building. Argues for greater attention to students' readiness to make connections across assignments and courses and to a field's inquiry methods and strategies for solving problems.


Explores the relationship among four contexts within the composition process of an explanatory text on the laws of light reflection through a kaleidoscope, written by eleven-year-olds to eight-year-old readers: the context of the writer, the context of reception, the context of the task, and the context of teaching and learning writing. Uses quantitative and qualitative analyses applied to verbal interactions among the participants in five collaborative writing groups. Finds the relevance of the context of reception to the writers' representation of the task and of the text and acknowledges the presence of multiple contexts dynamically interacting in the context of the task. Concludes that group work enhances knowledge building on discursive situations, on language, and on writing composition strategies and argues for the importance of designing instructional sequences that allow the negotiation of explicit learning goals and the monitoring and control of one's own learning and writing process.


Proposes to differentiate between acquisition of writing strategies and learning-to-write strategies in the writing curriculum. Describes an experimental curriculum aimed at providing opportunities to gain a critical perspective on the writing process. Provides qualitative and quantitative results from an empirical trial. Presents various learning effects of roles in the curriculum (writer-reviser, reader, commentator-instructor,) as reported by 80 secondary-school students. Argues that different curricular concepts result in different learning effects.

Examines the use of a process-based collaborative writing circle by 10 women (ages 19-35) who attended General Educational Development (GED) classes as part of their treatment in a residential correctional center. Uses quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze sample GED essays written during the first and last weeks of the 18-week study and questionnaires the women completed at the end of the study. Finds that the vast majority of the women reported that the small collaborative writing group both helped them improve their writing and reading skills and helped them feel better about themselves, that a majority of the women liked the women-only nature of the group, and that 70% of the women increased their scores on essay two. Argues that the study extends knowledge of adult correctional literacy programs and that more research needs to be done on women offenders' learning needs and styles.


Examines the relationship between the development of phonological awareness and the development of writing in Spanish-speaking kindergartners. Uses quantitative analysis to measure the effects of phonological awareness on learning to read and write. Finds that phonological awareness is not an either/or phenomenon but that it develops across levels and that this development is related to children's writing development. Concludes that children's ability to benefit from systematic phonemic instruction depends on their level of writing development and that encouraging children to write in kindergarten and first grade is an important way to stimulate the analysis of spoken words or other meaningful units.