

Science of Reading: The Role of Writing

Produced for the New York State Education Department by Nonie K. Lesaux, PhD & Katie C. Carr, M.Ed.

The Reading-Writing Relationship

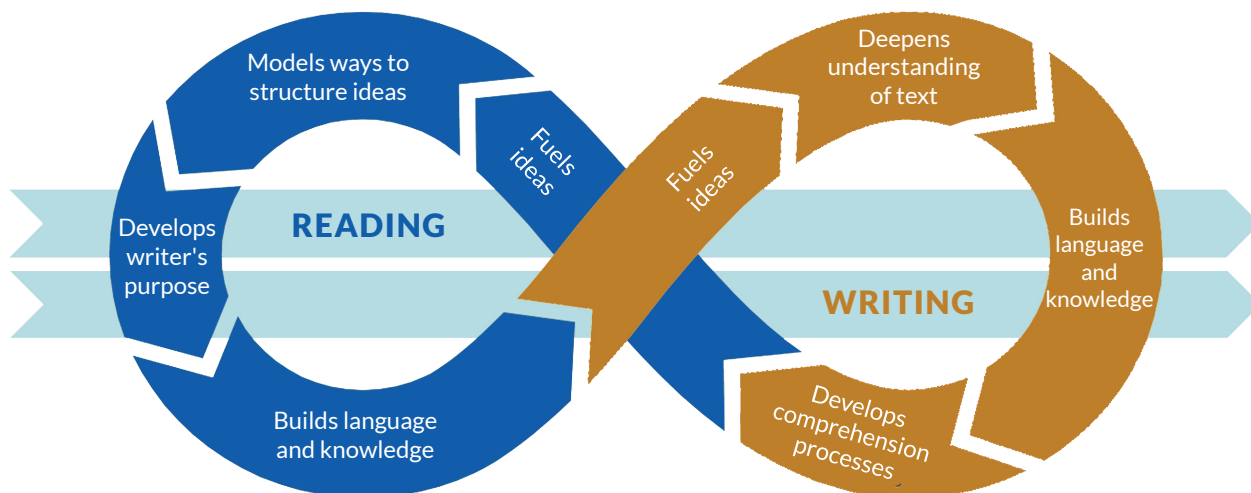
Creating effective literacy-learning opportunities and environments requires a clear understanding of the integral role that writing plays in building students’ literacy skills—and an understanding of the reciprocal nature of the reading-writing relationship.

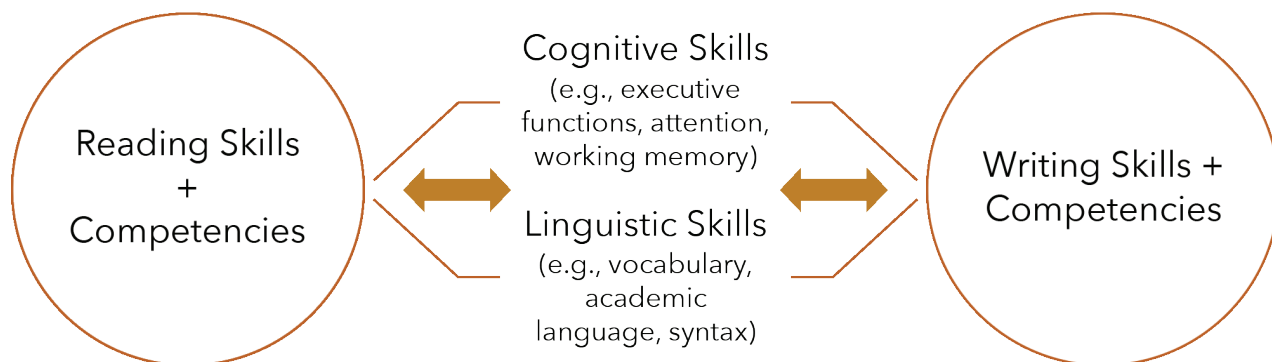
From the earliest years, as students develop and refine their writing skills, they become stronger readers. Their ability to think critically about what they are reading as well as author’s craft improves, as does their capacity to engage with text in meaningful ways. And the reverse is also very true! The more our students read, the stronger their writing—and they are on the path to developing literacy skills for life.

The New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards outline Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers (p. 8). Investigate the patterns and behaviors that shape a sustained and enriching engagement with literacy throughout a lifetime.

Reading-Writing Connections

Reading fuels the writer with ideas, language, and ways to structure and illuminate the written piece’s purpose. And writing promotes a deeper understanding of any text, further building language (home language and English for ELLs), knowledge, and communication skills.





More Reciprocity!

There are a number of key cognitive and linguistic skills that support the development of reading and writing processes—and that are developed through reading and writing work. These include attention, executive functions, working memory, vocabulary and academic language.

Writing In The Content Areas

When it comes to writing, each discipline or content area has its own style, structure, and format.

So, not only are reading-writing connections crucial for literacy learning from PreK through secondary, they are also crucial because students are practicing writing for different audiences, in different genres, and using specific conventions for content areas.

Rich, content-based literacy instruction supports students' ability to write about what they read—and to craft different types of writing products to match the purpose, audience, and subject area conventions and genres.

Instructional Snapshots—PreK through Secondary:

Regular opportunities to craft different writing products and a focus on explicit instruction on how to write in specific genres and formats typical of a given discipline—from lab reports and reports that compare information, to the narrative and persuasive essay, to emails and proposals.

Curricular Snapshots—PreK Through Secondary:

A content-based approach to literacy instruction—with units based in interesting knowledge-building content, with themes and texts steeped in science and social studies topics, all of which fuel reading-writing application and work.



Building Literacy For All: Emphasizing Reading-Writing Connections

Reading and writing both demand: 1) active construction of meaning; 2) interactions with text; 3) development and activation of conceptual and background knowledge (or “schema”) and; 4) development of the “Big 6” skills and competencies¹ described in **Brief 1**. From PreK to secondary, the high-impact practices (outlined in Briefs 4, 5, and 6), cultivate strong literacy skills. Their effective implementation demands ample opportunities for writing.

High-Impact Practices (See Briefs 4, 5, 6) Developing the "Big 6" + Writing	Sample Writing Tasks + Products
Collaborative and Culminating Projects, Performances, and Celebrations	Planning documents, scripts, lines and dialogue, schedules, research organizers, signs and posters, self-reflections, writing for a specific purpose and audience
Text-Based Discussions and Writing Opportunities	Graphic organizers, engagement in multiple stages of the writing process, written responses to text-based discussion prompts and questions, book reports, author review, theme analysis, topic-based research work
Engagement with a Variety of High-Interest, Diverse, and Complex Texts	
Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Spelling, and Word Study Skill-Building	Phonics and morphological work and games, opportunities for spelling practices and quizzes, interactive word walls, text annotation that identifies text features, explicit instruction in syntax and grammar
Fostering Understanding of Print Conventions, Features, and Functions	

¹ "Big 6" skills + competencies: oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency

Reflect and Analyze: Professional Learning & Strategic Planning

- How are reading and writing related? What are some of the specific reading processes that fuel writing development—and what are some of the writing processes that fuel reading development? What other types of skills are fueled by reading and writing, and vice versa?
- Identify the specific ways that your curricular approach reflects reading-writing connections? What are the areas of strength? What are the opportunities for deeper connections?
- Discuss the role that explicit instruction in writing across disciplines, for diverse audiences and for diverse purposes plays in the development of lifelong literacy skills for students.
- Consider whether your curricular approach gives students (PreK through secondary) a chance to practice writing different genres, for different audiences, and for different purposes. Identify areas of strength.
- What adjustments in curriculum, pedagogy, and resource allocation (including for professional learning) might be needed to strengthen content-based writing instruction?

Key References & Resources

References

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Resources

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