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EDU 575

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Our lesson study team is studying the question, “How does the integration of deep reading practices and comprehension skills contribute to the enhancement of writing acumen?” The paper we researched to help talked about multiple theoretical models that have guided research on the relationship between reading and writing. The first states that reading and writing use many shared cognitive processes (such as visual systems, phonological systems, semantic systems, short-term memory, long-term memory, words, sentences, text, etc.) and tries to discern between the similarities and differences of these processes in reading versus writing (Shanahan 2016, p. 194). This is essential for us to understand because we need to know what cognitive processes overlap between reading and writing. Then, we can more easily construct activities in class that bridge the reading-writing thought process.

The second theoretical model focuses on how both reading and writing use metaknowledge about written language (Shanahan 2016, p. 195). Specifically, it is important to monitor one’s own meaning making during the reading and writing processes. Metacognition during reading is extremely important to practice and teach in the classroom. Students may not be monitoring their comprehension because they do not know how to. So, it is important for teachers to model it, out loud for example. This is another possible idea for our group to use in the lesson study. We could potentially model the breakdown of a mentor text in order for students to understand the structure and meaning of it before writing their own.

One instructional implication of the Shanahan study is that, “students can be taught the cognitive and linguistic skills that underlie reading and writing, and there can be both reading and writing outcomes. It would be wise for teachers to have students explore these skills through reading activities and writing activities” (Shanahan 2016, p. 203). This evidence begins to answer our question about whether or not there is a connection between reading and writing instruction, and indicates that there is a positive correlation when the skills for one or the other are studied. Some examples that they provide are to teach students, “to think about readers’ comprehension needs during writing, how to read in ways that improve research papers, how to write as a study skill, and how to think about authors effectively during the reading of history” (Shanahan 2016, p. 203). These are all potential skills to teach in our lesson study. Other research findings to consider were all in primary grades and were not as useful to our group.

In considering how to more directly make a connection between reading or studying texts and writing, we want to practice using mentor texts with our students. Mentor texts can be a good way to provide specific requirements for students’ writing and can expose students to a variety of challenging texts related to the content they are currently studying. In an interview with former English teacher and current Middle School Director Juliet Mohnkern, she explains that one use of mentor texts is to mirror the type of text that students are actually going to write. She explains, “I also find that reading a text similar to what we’re going to write at a professional level is helpful to students so they can see a level that they are aspiring to be at” (J. Mohnkern,

personal communication, January 12, 2024). This is something that we would like to implement on a smaller level in the lesson study. Instead of having a whole example of an op-ed, for example, students may be able to have an example of a writing skill or technique that we want them to use. It is important not only to tell students what they should do, but show them what that looks and sounds like. “As writers, I can't imagine how they would grow without having a model of what they would aspire to in writing” (J. Mohnkern, personal communication, January 12, 2024). As a lesson study group, using mentor texts as models for writing is an activity that we are leaning towards using and studying.

References

- Shanahan, T. (2016). Relationships between reading and writing development. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research* (2nd ed., pp. 194–207). The Guilford Press.