

Panel Presentation

Panel Title: The Impact of Cognitive Process Models for Writing in a Social Context

Impact of Process Writing for Social Purposes with Language Learning Disorders

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This presentation will provide a case study illustration of the impact of a cognitive process model of writing for a 9 year-old developing writer with severe language learning disorder (LLD). Based on a larger qualitative investigation, this elementary school aged writer was followed over the course of an academic year as part of his language intervention program. Using qualitative research methodology, this writer's on-line writing process was captured in video views of the entire writing environment as well as close up recordings of the pencil in action on the paper. This allowed for detailed analysis of his writing process, including the interactive aspects, in addition to analysis of his written products. This presentation will detail two aspects of developmental change in this writer. Despite the nature of his language disorder, this writer demonstrated positive developmental changes in a number of relevant writing traits including content, organization, and spelling. His use of thirteen writing strategies was also detailed, including changes to seven of those strategies over the course of the investigation.

This intervention program was situated in cognitive constructivism as a theoretical basis, with emphasis on process writing in a social context for interactive purposes. From the constructive perspective, active engagement in the composition of written material requires an interaction between one's background resources, one's desire to communicate a message, and the actual message itself. Linguistic, cognitive, and experiential resources are woven together with the aim of meaningful text construction. This weaving together is accomplished through the utilization of various strategies that the writer has developed and/or acquired from numerous sources across multiple writing experiences. These strategies allow a writer to employ a range of skills when writing. Over time and with increased experience, writers gain control over the strategies they employ so that they have a set of constructive "tools adaptable to a variety of situations along with the ability to read contexts well enough to know which tools to employ in a given situation" (Dean, 2005).

This case study, as part of an overall panel presentation related to the impact of social orientations to writing, serves to demonstrate that, as with all endeavors of human learning, the primary source of the changes in strategies and behaviors is a desire to engage in a meaningful activity, in this case, writing. Engagement in the writing process with a focus on creating meaningful content and clarifying that content provided a source of influence for the developmental changes observed in this investigation.