Introduction

- Written expression is an important and complex academic and linguistic outcome for children in school; thus, writing is an important consideration for clinical interventions. In order to support children in learning to write, it is important to ascertain if children understand writing as a process that includes planning, translating, and revising (Hayes & Berninger, 2014) and the skills needed for each of these writing process components.

- Prior research has demonstrated that children's knowledge about how to write has direct implications on their writing development, predicts writing performance, and predicts academic success across curricular domains (Berninger & Richards, 2012; Saddler & Graham, 2006).

- Current research suggests a shift from traditional, natural learning approaches for teaching writing, to using meta-cognitive approaches with explicit teaching of self-regulated strategy development (SRSD; Graham & Harris, 2012; De La Paz & Graham, 2002) which directly requires children’s knowledge of writing to support instruction.

- In the current study, survey research addresses the need to further our understanding of children’s knowledge of writing by asking open ended questions about writing processes (Hayes & Berninger, 2014; Hayes & Flower, 1980). Open ended responses allowed for children to show what they know about writing and provide insight for where explicit, meta-cognitive instruction on writing processes might be warranted.

- The purpose of this study was to better understand what intermediate grade children think and know about writing processes by asking them open ended questions housed within well accepted theoretical frameworks of writing. The following research questions were addressed:

  1) How do sixth grade children describe the role of planning and revising as part of the writing process?

  2) What do sixth grade children cite as is the source of their ideas for writing?

  3) What do sixth grade children understand as the important or key components of writing processes?

Sample

Table 1. Descriptive Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N = 182</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female : Male</td>
<td>107 : 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age in years</td>
<td>11.60 (56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years of Mother’s Ed</td>
<td>14.21 (1.86)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Reading and Diagnostic Evaluation

- Children from 11 different sixth grade classrooms provided written responses to 5 open-ended survey questions about the writing process. The sample included only children with Typical Development as indicated by parent and teacher questionnaire.

- A coding system was developed to categorize and consolidate responses across questions in a manner that could be interpreted clinically.

- Inter-rater agreement for coding of 20% of samples (n = 36) was as follows: Q1 = 92%; Q2 = 89%; Q3 = 81%; Q4 = 86%; Q5 = 86%; and considered good.

Procedures

- This study examined what intermediate grade children think and know about writing processes and provides insights on how to provide meta-cognitive instruction as part of written language interventions.

- Children in this study viewed planning as a prewriting task, and demonstrated knowledge about advanced planning strategies such as idea generation consistent with theoretical models of writing (Hayes & Berninger, 2014; Hayes & Flower, 1980).

- Most of the children surveyed viewed revising as an important task, but focused solely on either reading or editing writing for superficial features (grammar, spelling). Notably, peer-reading/editing is a well documented strategy in the research literature (Graham & Perin, 2007).

- Clinical implications for working with children on writing include providing meta-cognitive instruction about writing processes to improve their knowledge and understanding of how writing processes interact and support the final writing sample.

  - For example, if a child approaches the writing process in a linear manner, where their revising process is utilized for editing accuracy and mechanics once they are finished composing their work, they can be taught specific strategies for revising their work beyond simple editing. These include monitoring and transforming their composition as they write to improve what they have written, and to write more effectively by organizing and generating ideas in a non-linear manner that suits their conceptualization and operationalization of writing processes (Harris & Graham, 2012).

  - This analysis demonstrates the validity and reliability of the coding system used, which can now be applied to a diverse set of learners including those who struggle with writing, have a learning disability, or are English language learners.

Discussion

- This study examined what intermediate grade children think and know about writing processes and provides insights on how to provide meta-cognitive instruction as part of written language interventions.

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Acknowledgements

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- Correspondence about this project should be directed to anthony.koutsoftas@shu.edu
References


