Using the writing portfolio to reflect reading progress at the first-grade level

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Abstract
Maintaining portfolios of students' writings has become a popular means of assessing both students' progress and program effectiveness in writing at the first-grade level. The strong relationship that exists between writing processes and reading processes indicates that writing portfolios may provide a productive source of information for a teacher in assessing first-grade students' progress in reading processes as well as in writing ability. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a background of information and a rationale that will support the use of writing portfolios to assess both writing and reading processes at the first grade level.
USING THE WRITING PORTFOLIO
TO REFLECT READING PROGRESS
AT THE FIRST-GRADE LEVEL

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Maintaining portfolios of students' writings has become a popular means of assessing both students' progress and program effectiveness in writing at the first-grade level. The strong relationship that exists between writing processes and reading processes indicates that writing portfolios may provide a productive source of information for a teacher in assessing first-grade students' progress in reading processes as well as in writing ability. The purpose of this literature review is to provide a background of information and a rationale that will support the use of writing portfolios to assess both writing and reading processes at the first-grade level.

Effective use of writing portfolios for assessing students' progress in both writing and reading depends on a teacher's understanding of diagnostic teaching and a knowledge of the interactive nature of reading and writing processes. Therefore, this paper will include a review of concepts and procedures related to diagnostic teaching as well as a review of current views on the nature of reading and writing processes.

In addition to understanding these process concepts, a teacher's effective assessment of a student's progress in writing and
reading through a writing portfolio is dependent on relevant and useful information within the portfolio. Therefore, this paper will also include a review of effective procedures for building and maintaining the students' writing portfolios.

A teacher's interpretation of information provided through writings in a portfolio depends on the teacher's understanding of the evolutionary nature, or stages, within process writing experiences and the types of classroom activities that support process writing. Therefore, this paper will include a review of the types of classroom experiences that yield appropriate portfolio items for assessment.

Finally, the information from the areas of diagnostic teaching, reading and writing processes, process writing procedures, and portfolio management will be integrated into a statement on the uses of the writing portfolio to reflect reading progress and classroom instruction.

**Statement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this review is to analyze and synthesize the literature related to the use of writing portfolio assessments to determine the value of portfolio assessment for assessing progress in both reading and writing. Specifically, the study is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What connection, if any, is there between the process of reading and the process of writing?
2. What information is provided through a writing portfolio?

3. How does the use of a writing portfolio contribute to assessment of the progress of the student as a writer?

4. How does the use of a writing portfolio contribute to the assessment of the progress of the student as a reader?

Significance of the Review

This review will examine the value of the writing portfolio, the information drawn from the writing portfolio, and the usefulness of this information for reading instruction. In order to develop these concepts, the review will support and relate the following to the purpose of this review: diagnostic teaching, relationship of reading and writing, process writing, and portfolio management.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this review, the following terms are defined:

Empowerment: Helping students develop their capacity for self-reflection and making judgments. Students develop a set of values, assess their work according to those values, celebrate when they meet the expectations implied in those values, and then develop new directions for themselves (Paulson & Paulson, 1990).

Portfolio Assessment: A process which is based on a selection of students' writing over time. The concept behind portfolio assessment is consistent with whole language philosophy in that it is a natural process which guides teachers and put students at the
center of the learning process. Students continually examine, discuss, and reflect on the contents of the portfolio as a part of the process (Routman, 1991).

Whole Language: Philosophy which refers to meaningful, real, and relevant teaching and learning. Whole language respects the idea that all language processes (listening, speaking, reading, and writing - including spelling and handwriting) are learned naturally and in meaningful context as a whole, not in little parts (Routman, 1988).

Writing Process: The process in which children take charge of their own development as writers. They experience all five subprocesses of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing (Graves, 1983).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The focus of first-grade teachers should be to start students on a successful road to becoming life-time readers. Through an environment that emphasizes the natural use of language, instruction can begin that develops readers who will achieve in reading.

This review of literature will examine how the writing portfolio may be employed to reflect reading progress, especially with young students. First, diagnostic teaching will be discussed to determine its impact on portfolio assessment. The second area to be discussed will be the interaction of the reading and writing processes. This information will aid in understanding the value of the writing portfolio for assessing reading progress. In order to understand what is included in the writing portfolio and how that information can be used for evaluating students in both writing or reading, a description of process writing will be given and how, from that process, information is extracted for use in instruction. Finally, based on diagnostic concepts, the reading and writing interaction, and use of the writing portfolio, a discussion of how these factors contribute to using portfolios as a means of assessing reading progress will be presented.
Nature of Diagnostic Teaching

The reasons for using writing portfolios in the classroom are grounded in concepts related to diagnostic teaching. To understand procedures for portfolio assessment, teachers must develop an understanding of the diagnostic process. According to Gillet and Temple (1990), the purpose of the diagnostic process in a learning environment is to become informed about students. The teacher acts as the observer in every day learning situations, constantly becoming aware of and responding to students' needs. In the diagnostic process, the teacher acts in the roles of an anthropologist. The teacher can act as the participant observer (working with students), the detached observer (listening to the students working cooperatively), and the collector of artifacts (collecting samples of students' work). Through this process, the teacher builds a store of knowledge about the students that indicate, their literacy development (Cambourne, 1988).

Stayter and Johnston (1990) described this day-to-day, moment-to-moment transaction of literacy learning as evaluation. Since the root of evaluation is value (Hansen, 1987), students and teachers should make this diagnostic process central or most valued to effective learning and teaching (Stayter & Johnston, 1990).

Yet another way to think of diagnostic instruction is in the teacher's role as "kidwatcher." From direct, informal observation by
the teacher in a classroom, information can determine language learned and errors made. Insights from the errors students make aid teachers in what processes and knowledge the students are using (Goodman, 1978).

Part of the diagnostic process should be, then, to identify strengths and weaknesses of the students. Instructional changes would evolve from the identification process (Gillet & Temple, 1990). This process should be cyclic and continuous. Writings of students that reflect their needs and progress can be maintained and form a central source of information for assessment and instructional planning.

Through the diagnostic process, students are treated as individuals. Effective instruction in a diagnostic process assumes that all children learn in different ways, apply different strategies, and come from different conditions with different purposes for learning (Gillet & Temple, 1990). Therefore, the writing portfolio for each child is a unique and personal collection of information.

Portfolios as a part of the evaluation process call also for students to reflectively collect samples of their own work over a period of time. Teachers and students can assess the samples and determine from the assessment specific instructional strategies and on-going literacy experiences that can occur. This collaborative effort in relation to portfolios assists students in becoming self-
evaluators (Au & Mason, 1990) and contributes significantly to literacy growth (Stayter & Johnston, 1990).

**Interaction of Writing and Reading**

In addition to diagnostic teaching, a second factor that directly effects the use of writing portfolios for assessing reading and writing progress is the common essence of, and therefore natural interaction between, the processes of reading and writing. This mutual relationship underlying between reading and writing has been recognized by many researchers and theorists. Early in the development of this idea, Clay (1979) stated that writing allows the student to attend and orient himself or herself to print, organize the investigation of print, and study print which forms words and sentences. Clay believes that, at early stages, writing has a significant impact on reading.

This connection between reading and writing is also supported by Cooter and Reutzel (1990) who noted the reciprocal process as they observed writing and reading with first-grade students. They observed that students in their study of the writing process students saw relationships among letter sounds, words, and phrases.

Blackburn (1984) identifies composing as the process which reading and writing jointly share. Blackburn watched students act like artists, taking control of the print, shaping it, working with it, and forming the text into what becomes their artworks and
masterpieces. Research findings indicate that this relationship generates from the common concepts of language that underlies both reading and writing processes.

Writing and reading are interdependent processes (Hornsby & Parry, 1985) which are both necessary and beneficial to each other. Writing demands a dynamic process to occur which gives constant feedback to the learner. It allows for natural and gradual approximations to occur which aid the student in controlling or mastering the reading of the material. Writing aids students in using everything they know about language to unlock what they do not know. Both writing and reading demand that students revise thoughts, meaning, and linguistic expression (Altwerger, Edelsky, & Flores, 1991). Both processes demand purpose for meaning of print, which implies an overlapping of processes.

In Dobson's (1985) work with first-grade students, progressions from writing to reading were confirmed. Dobson observed students writing and making attempts at developing meaningful messages. These students developed as writers first and then tried reading. Because the writing provided a sense of accomplishment, students developed strategies to improve the writing process. While these students wrote, the process of reading was going on. Checking work, looking back, and revising all require
the students to read. These early stages of literacy are a natural process in language learning.

Harste (1990) also established that writing is the avenue which allows young learners to explore the graphophonemic system of language through invented spelling. Students need opportunities to discover the function of letters which aids in determining sound-to-letter and letter-to-sound match. Because students are exploring through writing, they are discovering the code of print and unlocking the code to enable them to read.

In other supportive arguments for the writing and reading connection, Harp (1987) stated that writing reinforces concepts of word, sentence, topic, main idea, sequence, plot, and so on. Harp also pointed out that the more students wrote, the better the reading became, because students were personally involved in the text. Agnew (1982) agreed that early writing does enhance word recognition -- the concept of word. Agnew described this as semantic efficacy or superior retention. Through writing, cognitive clarity is developed and students develop a code consciousness which is used in the reading process.

Finally, Shanahan and Lomax (1986) determined that the interactive model of reading and writing processes is significant. They described the model as reading knowledge used in writing and writing knowledge used in reading. Calkins (1986) concluded,
The reading-writing connections that matter most are the small 'ah-has' that happen when a youngster see glimpses of the relatedness between reading and writing. They are the moments of connectedness that a child experiences because he or she is an insider in the world of written language. (p. 232)

Many researchers and theorists agree that a connection does exist between reading and writing. Such evidence of the firm relationship between reading and writing processes implies that the selected writing samples in a student's portfolio may be a valuable source for both information concerning the student's reading development and information indicating instructional needs for enhanced reading development. The next section identifies the nature of the writing portfolio, how process writing would look in a first-grade classroom, how samples and assessments are extracted from students, and how a writing portfolio may be used to enhance reading instruction.

Content of the Writing Portfolio

To draw valuable information from a writing portfolio, a teacher must understand the process of developing a final written product. The specific works gathered for a portfolio determine the diagnostic value of the portfolio for assessing reading and writing progress. Selections of students' writing at different stages of writing give different views or insights to a child's abilities. Therefore, process writing and the stages of writing are useful in selecting items for the
portfolio. The following information presents concepts of process writing and additional suggestions for selecting portfolio materials. **Nature of Process Writing**

Graves (1983) stated that 90% of first-grade students believe they can write. Graves’s (1983) plan for further growth of writing with students stems from the research done at Atkinson, New Hampshire. In this study, a team of researchers closely observed elementary students and how they learned to write. On the basis of these observations, Graves described five stages of the writing process. The following is a breakdown of the stages and the suggestions made by various experts on approaches that can be used at each stage with first-grade students or students at an emergent-literacy level.

Stage one, planning stage (Au & Mason, 1990), rehearsal (Calkins, 1986), or topic choosing (Graves, 1983) all refer to the way students decide what to write about. All researchers agree that for purposeful writing to occur at any level the topic must be chosen by the students themselves. Use of story starters or teacher-picked topics does not encourage ownership of the writing (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983). For first-grade students, drawing pictures plays a very important role at the planning stage. Pictures provide the supportive scaffolding from which written pieces can be constructed. Students in first-grade thus need a variety of materials available at the planning
stage and throughout the writing process. Materials used include crayons, markers, pencils, pens, plain paper, lined paper, scissors, staplers, and space to work.

Stage two is termed drafting (Calkins, 1986) or composing (Graves, 1983). This stage can be defined as the act of producing the initial written text. Especially in the first-grade, students explore strategies for sounds, spacing of words, and left-to-right printing during this stage of process writing. Thus, concerns should not be on correct spelling (Gaskets, 1988) or the mechanics involved in writing, but rather on the content or message conveyed in the written piece. Calkins (1986) noted that during drafting a progression of strategies for spelling develops as first-graders write consistently.

The progressive stages of spelling can be depicted as prephonemic-spelling (letters and letter-like forms); early-phonemic spelling (short strings of letters with initial consonant represents sounds); letter-name spelling (firm awareness that letters represent sounds with some letters omitted yet); transitional spelling (nearly complete spelling knowledge); and derivation spelling (mastery of most phonemic and rule-governed patterns) (Gillet & Temple, 1989). All the stages are components of what is identified as invented spelling. It is very healthy and a natural part of the developmental process for first graders and other learners to use
invented spelling strategies so that the drafting stage is not labored down with the ideas that the words always have to be correctly spelled and conform to adult conventions of spelling. During drafting (Calkins, 1986), students develop, throughout the first-grade year, not only invented spelling strategies but also fluency, length of pieces, and organizational framework for the writing.

The third stage, revision, follows drafting. This stage is defined as the interactive part of writing (Calkins, 1986). First-grade students need to discuss or interact with their peers and teachers to develop as writers (Goodman, 1986). During the revision period, students can communicate and become critical thinkers about other students' work and their own. At the revision time, students can reflect on their writings through conferences in small groups with other students, in pairs, by themselves, or with the teacher. The conferencing process involves the writer's reading his/her piece while others listen to the writer who then listens to a retelling of the story by the listeners. If this conferencing reveals that something is not clear, or leads the writer to decide to alter the original text, then revisions are made.

When teachers model revision techniques through minilessons, students are encouraged to experiment with these strategies in their own writing (Calkins, 1986). Russell (1983) recommended modeling the conference techniques that students would use with each other
several times. He suggested making a list of questions which students could refer to when conferencing. When the teacher relinquishes the role as the sole conference partner, students take on more ownership of the process. This ownership leads to process learning and self-reflection of the work, which empowers the students in their learning. Through these interactions, the students develop communication and critical thinking skills which are beneficial to all factions of their learning processes.

Editing, the fourth stage, may be the most difficult to develop in first-grade because of the belief many students carry with them that, when the writing is down on paper, it is a finished piece. Calkins (1986) recommended a simple form of editing at first. Minilessons, or modeling, can be used to demonstrate what the teacher's expectations will be. A strong emphasis should be placed on rereading the written text. First-graders are encouraged to ask questions of themselves, (e.g., "Is this my best work?"). A teacher's editing checklist, which includes exactly what the teacher will be looking for in the writing, may lengthen as the year progresses and as students develop in the writing process. Editing conferences should be available if they can be scheduled. Students can also place written work in a special work box in the room for the teacher to look at with the students as time permits.
The last stage of the writing process is publishing (Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1986). In first grade, students will write four or five pieces and select one of these to publish in approximately 10 days (Graves, 1983). Graves (1983) also suggested the following guidelines to be used in publishing with young writers: correct invented spelling, encourage the writer with small doses of corrections, and warn of changes which are needed so the writer's classmates will be able to read the stories that are published. Published work can be put in book form, displayed on bulletin boards, or shared from the author's chair. Some teachers encourage written work to go home with blank pages at the end of the student's published book for parents to comment on and return to school to be shared (Routman, 1988).

Process writing, presented with its five stages to first graders (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983; Routman, 1988), allows students to take charge of their writing. Students learn through an active writing process which is on-going and shows growth. When using the five-stage process, students feel valued, encouraged, and supported by the teacher in developing writing in a natural, holistic way (Routman, 1988). This process calls for an assessment that is also natural and holistic. The writing portfolio provides such a basis for assessment.
Gathering Data for the Writing Portfolio

Goodman (1986) sees effective teachers as "kidwatchers." Writing portfolios allow this. Teachers observe the process and the changes that occur in young writers that develop around natural and holistic learning. In the classroom, the teacher, like a researcher, needs to step back and observe the students and record the observations made over a period of time (Gomez, Graue, & Bloch; 1991). These observations can be inserted into the portfolio for use in the assessment process.

There is a need for students to look to themselves for evaluation of writing, rather than depend on a teacher to make the comments on their work in order to evaluate it for them to ensure personal development. Students need to learn to practice self-evaluation. Wolf (1989) emphasised that point with the following scenarios.

Last summer when the Dodgers were heating up, I heard a radio announcer tease pitcher Orel Hershiser about keeping a journal. Hershiser wasn't phased. He simply said human memory is too faulty and he cares too much about what makes him crackerjack one day and just average the next not to keep track. Several days later, I visited a small gallery where they show artist's books and working drawings. Inside, the walls and cases were crammed with sketches by Ree Morton, a sculptor who began studying art in her thirties, surrounded by young children, drafting and writing on top of the washing machine. There on the gallery walls was evidence of another kind of evaluation: Morton would stalk an idea from inception to final work, making version after version after version. Then 2 days ago, I listened to Sonny Rollins reminiscing on a jazz show. He was remembering how, smack in the middle of gigs and tours, he decided to "step out to find a new sound." He left
the world of clubs and concert halls to practice hours at a time where the acoustics would let him get inside the music - solo on the bridges of New York City.

Here is both promise and trouble. The promise lies in the demonstration of how demanding and thoughtful we can be about shaping work that matters to us. The trouble lies in recognizing how we ignore this capacity in schools. (p. 35)

One way to give our students time to be thoughtful in their writing in the classroom and to develop reflective self-evaluation is through the use of writing portfolios. As educators, our goal should be to encourage our students to be reflective in their learning, a process that is on-going in nature and develops life-long learners. The power of writing portfolios (Meyer, Paulson, & Paulson; 1991) assisted students to learn about learning and value their own work and their own selves as learners. First-grade students did develop strategies to assess in their own work and could internalize learning (Cooter & Reutzel, 1990).

Also important in gathering the data is that it should be multidimensional and the assessing should occur over time (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991). The following list and descriptions of ideas to implement in a writing portfolio are what are currently suggested in the research:

1. Showcase and Working Portfolios: Students maintain a working portfolio with drafts and other writing works that students feel need to be polished or worked on some more. Showcase portfolios contain the works that students have taken to publishing or
have shown some growth or learning for the student. The key element to this process is the child selects the best work (Lamme & Hysmith, 1991).

2. Student's Drafts: As a student writes a draft, it should be dated and kept with other drafts that are also dated. These drafts give a sampling of the processes the student is trying out (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991).

3. Published Works: After a student has worked on a piece and takes the piece to publishing, it may be considered by the student to be one of his/her best works. In making the selection of the best work for the portfolio, students may be asked to reflect and answer the following questions: "Why I chose this piece? What I learned? What are my future goals." (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991, p. 46)

4. Checklist: A checklist may be helpful to guide a teacher and student and many are already available for use. In simplifying the assessing process to a predetermined checklist, students may conform to meeting the criteria of that checklist. Having the student determine which items he/she did successfully would again attest to the importance of reflective assessing (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991).

5. Conferences: During the writing conference with students, questions can be asked to gain information about processes the
student is employing. Conferences can be individual or with small
groups. The teacher would keep notes of the discussion for
comparison purposes and for students to refer to as they need
information or feedback (Calkins, 1986; Hansen, 1987).

using a form on which students and teacher would record and date
behaviors observed. The categories would include mechanics,
strategies, and insights.

7. Parents' Comments: Attached to any published piece, a page
would be left for parents to comment on students' work. Parents
would have the opportunity to comment on any processes the child is
employing (Routman, 1988).

8) Peer Comments: Students are also asked to comment on for
their peers writing. Blank pages attached to the piece would serve as
the comment area (Routman, 1988).

9. Anecdotal Records: While a teacher is stepping back from
the class to be the researcher, so to speak, he/she can be gathering
notes on students and the strategies they use or do not use
(Goodman, Goodman, & Hood, 1989).

10. Learning Log or Journals: Students are called on to reflect
on the learning that they have achieved or have not achieved. They
must determine what works for them and what does not (Tierney,
The classroom teacher could not implement all of these components of the portfolio processes at the same time, and not all of these components will work for a teacher or student in a given situation. A teacher should try to vary the type of data gathering by selecting 1 child a day to focus on and using a few of the approaches at a time.

Any of these approaches to be developed with the writing portfolio are very adaptable to any type of classroom. Research also indicates that writers of any age level would gain from this kind of assessment. Gathering the data is only the first part of determining reading and writing progress, and only supportive of the next step. The second step, which is the most important, is drawing information from the data and applying that information to the classroom, students, and teachers. This is where the writing portfolio can have its fullest impact on learning.

**Information Drawn from the Writing Portfolio**

Teachers who understand the process of writing and can manage development of writing portfolios may then apply their understanding of diagnostic teaching and reading and writing interaction for effective use of the information found in the writing portfolio. Teachers using the writing portfolio assessment have already decided that a holistic approach to learning has value. Because it has value, those same teachers have found a way to look at
students individually, tracking growth collaboratively with the child over time. By using the writing portfolio and supporting information, teachers and students become insiders to the learning they can achieve together (Calkins, 1986).

When students and teachers collect students' drafts and published works in a showcase or working portfolio, data are being collected that show growth and gaps (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991). It is the gathering of not a single work to determine a grade, but the accumulation of the young writers' notes, diagrams, drafts, and final versions. Data are used to gain insights on students' thinking, risk-taking, and struggles with new ideas (Wolf, 1989). In this respect, the classroom assessment is based on formative and summative information (Reardon, 1991). The assessment used in this type of classroom is reflective in nature, allowing the teacher to note risk-taking, involvement with a piece, predicting ability, and the mechanics of writing (Linek, 1991). Mechanics including critiquing, revising, and editing. Because the portfolio is kept over time, one can see individual growth, where the young writer is moving toward adult-like forms (Strickland, 1990).

First-grade students must be allowed to be members of the collaborative team when it comes to writing and learning. They have the most to gain from introspection of their own learning. The portfolio's biggest impact comes from the fact that students are
called on to be reflective of their own work. The ownership of the process comes back to the student (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991). However, the process also has a large impact on the teacher. Through the writing portfolio and supportive data collected in conferences, checklists, evaluation forms, and anecdotal records, teachers are called on to be reflective of the teaching strategies used (Stayter & Johnston, 1990). The teacher with learner collaborate to allow learning to occur in a holistic classroom. This active and ongoing process gives the collaborative team a sense of accomplishment, builds self-images, and develops confidence for all the learners, including teachers and students (Dobson, 1985).

The writing portfolio is an evaluation tool that represents the collaboration of the teacher and students and demands self-reflective evaluation by the students and the teacher (Reardon, 1991). Wolf (1989) stated, "Portfolios offer a human, useful, generative portrait or development- one that a teacher, like student, can learn from long after the isolated moment of assessment" (p. 39). A collection of documents, over time, gives an insight into a child's grasp of writing and reading progress not possible through a single document.

**Writing Portfolios and Reading Progress**

The information gathered on aspects of the writing portfolio in the prior sections gives strong support to the use of portfolio assessment to reflect reading progress. As Gillet and Temple (1990)
stated, teachers must become aware and respond to students' needs. The visibility of the portfolio gives teachers the tool to view students' works over time and see patterns of strengths and needs (Tierney, Carter, & Desai; 1991). The visibility here concerns not only the pure writing ability, but also the reading ability of students.

The research has developed a strong connection between reading and writing. The processes complement each other and allow the young learner to compose for meaning of print (Blackburn, 1984). Because this strong connection exists, the overlapping of reading and writing concepts also exist. Writing not only reinforces the concepts which support reading (Harp, 1987), but also is the avenue for young learners to discover, explore, and use print in a purposeful way (Harste, 1990). By using process writing and portfolio assessment, students learn to be reflective of their own writing and to find purpose in learning. Through the structure of process writing, the students are guided by their own interest and a teacher who is willing to work collaboratively, identifying what is known about language and developing what is unknown (Au & Mason, 1990).

Students are guided to make connections through the overlaps of reading and writing and make growth, not only in writing, but also in reading. Through the use of writing portfolios and supportive data, students can determine the connections between the known in their
reading and writing. Then they can work toward grasping the unknowns.

Knowledge of reading concepts for the young learner can now be examined by the teacher. Teale (1988) found assessment that related closely to written strategies aided in gaining insight to letter-sound knowledge with young learners. Written works of students provide the most visible indicator of knowledge of print. By assessing written work of the students, teachers have a source which provides information of what students have mastered and what they lack in language learning.

Looking at the drafts of students' work, teachers can be the insider to spelling conventions used by students. By using the portfolio, not only writing and spelling progress can be charted, but reading progress as well. The knowledge of letter-sound association, concept of word, phonemic segmentation skills, and systematic correspondence between spelling and students' pronunciation can be uncovered in student's writing (Teale, 1988). When teachers gain that insight, they can assist the learner where there are gaps and celebrate when a child makes a connection and grows as a learner (Strickland, 1990).

Cooter and Reutzel's (1990) study used students' works, checklists, and journals, all information that can be a part of the portfolio, to identify students' comprehension at different layers of
meaning. The study indicated that first-grade students, over time, applied story structure to writing, improved sight word knowledge, and increased knowledge of beginning, medial, and ending sounds.

The writings reveal comprehension in other ways. To the young writer, the writing portfolio contains what is meaningful to him/her. It reveals what is known to the learner and how the learner unlocks the unknowns of the printed language (Hornsby & Parry, 1985).

By having the writing portfolio in place in the classroom, teachers can observe students developing strategies of invented spelling, letter recognition, and phonetic matches (Dobson, 1985). Teachers have a place to record that raw data and determine strategies students may or may not be using. In other words, teachers can determine what students can read at these early years of literacy and the data collected shows the patterns which determine the instruction needed to develop students into better writers and better readers.

Because the act of purposeful learning is occurring and the development of writing and reading become interdependent, a holistic environment has been established. The key element of relating reading and writing becomes the writing portfolio. The power of writing and the writing portfolio is the tracking of growth for the young learners that looks not only at the writing but also at
reading. It gives the teacher diagnostic information which can be used to develop strategies with the learner. The writing portfolio is the framework of assessment which empowers the student learner and the teacher learner to grow in understanding of writing and reading (Tierney, Carter, & Desai, 1991).
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

This review of literature has developed strong support for use of the writing portfolio to enhance reading and reading instruction for first-grade students. By being informed about these young learners' writing, the teacher and learners have the knowledge that gives them direction, not only in writing but also in reading. This knowledge and the work of the collaborative team (teacher and students) should enhance life-long literacy skills and learning.

The connection between writing and reading indicates that much research and theory support the idea that one process has a strong impact on the other. Both processes not only demand many of the same strategies of the learner, but also interact with each other. In a classroom where writing and reading are encouraged and the learner feels ownership, the impact of the processes on each other is more fully achieved.

Introducing process writing to the young learner gives students not only a sense of authorship but also the ownership and purpose to learning. Process writing enhances both writing for meaning and reading for meaning of one's own text. Students learn at a young age that writing has many stages and layers of meaning. Writing improves
with time given to students for writing, students also improve their skills which reflect their reading progress.

When the teacher implements the writing portfolio with supportive data, students and teacher become a collaborative team. Reflecting on students' work over time, the team can determine strengths and weaknesses. The aspects of print can be determined and developed. By using a writing portfolio, a system of tracking is developed with the student to determine growth over time. The most powerful learning can occur from the student and teacher reflecting on this growth and determining which strategies are most successful.

The writing portfolio becomes integral to the process and a natural part of the reading and writing classroom. The implications of all the literature to this point strongly support use of the writing portfolio to enhance reading with the young or emerging learner.
REFERENCES


Harp, B. (1987). When the principal asks "Why are your kids writing during reading time?" *The Reading Teacher, 40*, 89-91.


