Despite research and theory to the contrary, approaches to the teaching of reading continue to reflect a transmission model of reading, focused on the retrieval of information from a text. This model prevents students from experiencing reading as an active, exploratory process, one that involves the making of meaning. It thus denies them their transactions with a text and the realization that reading involves such transactions. In order to give students experiences with reading that demonstrate the ways in which readers engage, contribute to, and make connections with texts, writing needs to be fully integrated with reading. Writing, because of its heuristic, generative, and recursive nature, allows students to write their way into reading and to discover that reading shares much in common with writing, that reading, too, is an act of composing.

It has become commonplace to characterize the act of writing as a meaning making, purposeful, evolving, recursive, dialogic, tentative, fluid, exploratory process. Recent research and theory in reading have shown us that these terms can be applied as well to the act of reading, for like writing, reading is characterized by active engagement through which meaning is created. But although there have been ongoing attempts to incorporate the implications of writing research and theory into the classroom, the teaching of reading seems to be less responsive to what we know about the process of reading, perhaps because it is difficult to reconcile the kinds of outward performance and demonstrations required by schooling with the internal experience of reading.

READING AS THE FINDING OF MEANING

The way reading gets taught (and evaluated) in schools tends to keep hidden from students the sense making and exploration that makes reading possible and that, in turn, reading makes possible. What is practiced in the guise of reading suggests to students that
reading is a receptive, and static process, rather than an active, participatory one involving the dynamic contributions of a reader. Shannon's (1989) historical analysis and detailed description of reading instruction point to the ways in which the teaching of reading has been translated into a technology requiring students to follow a set of prescribed and uniform procedures which are disconnected from students' lives and subjectivities, and over which students have little control. Rose's (1989) critique of educational practices applies particularly well to reading instruction. Teaching, he argues,

simplifies the dynamic tension between student and text and reduces the psychological and social dimensions of instruction. The student's personal history recedes as the what of the classroom is valorized over the how. Thus it is that the encounter of student and text is often portrayed . . . as a transmission. Information, wisdom, virtue will pass from the book to the student. (p. 235)

Reading is often reduced to the act of finding a particular idea, as if this idea resides fixed and absolute in a text. As Bartholomae (1986) has pointed out, "the language of reading instruction . . . is loaded with images of mastery and control. . . . A reader finds a controlling idea and follows it" (p. 96). This approach is most evident in the display or test questions which appear in reading texts (for both native speakers and ESL students), questions which immediately follow the assigned passage and which not only call for a predetermined answer rather than the interpretation of the student reader but which may, in fact, keep students from understanding the text: "Since traditional comprehension checks generally focus on myriad text details, many students learn to answer not by understanding the text well, but by looking progressively throughout the text, following the questions as they go" (Barnett, 1989, p. 134). It is not surprising, therefore, that students conclude that the very "purpose of reading text is to answer the questions that follow it" and that answering these questions correctly signifies that they have understood what the text means (Belenoff, 1987, p. 102). Given the ritualized activities that characterize reading instruction and the specification of correct answers upon which it is based, students come to believe that "reading is the attempt to memorize text which someone else selects so that you can reproduce factual information when questioned" (Shannon, 1989, p. 96). Meaning thus becomes understood as something contained in a text or something that exists "out there," rather than something that results when a reader finds a way to make the representation of meaning possible. In the case of ESL
students, the problem is compounded; the emphasis on determining and identifying the meaning in a text quite naturally gives way to the ineffective strategy of reading word-for-word, bilingual dictionary in hand. Some textbooks reinforce this strategy by assigning numerous exercises on vocabulary; however, even when textbooks try to dissuade students from the notion that reading proceeds in this way, by pushing students to time themselves as they read and providing them with exercises in skimming and scanning, the emphasis on the retrieval of information predominates.

By being taught according to the reductive assumption that reading is a matter of identifying and retrieving a set of ideas that reside in and are transmitted by a text, a set of ideas that all readers can agree upon, as implied by Hirsch's (1987) "cultural literacy," readers are denied both their own transactions with a text and the critical understanding that reading involves such a transaction (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1986a; Freire, 1983; Rosenblatt, 1978). Furthermore, this denial is often enacted quite literally. Given a fragmented approach to curricula, whereby language and literacy processes are artificially separated from one another, students are prevented from writing about their reading because it is believed that their writing "confounds reading" (Petrosky, 1982, p. 19). But teachers, too, are kept from interacting with the text in any meaningful way, for the technology of reading instruction, with its mandated textbooks, directives, guidebooks, and tests, limits the teacher's role to one of monitoring and managing students, thereby undermining a teacher's autonomy, experience, knowledge, and literate behavior (Shannon, 1989). Thus, a transmission model of reading characterizes the experiences even of teachers involved in reading these texts, and this model is passed on to the student.

Yet another context in which such a model of reading keeps teachers from interacting with texts in a genuine way is when they read students' papers, looking for predetermined kinds of texts, for certain sets of ideas, and for particular textual features. White's (1984) discussion of the relationship between theories of reading and the ways in which teachers interpret and respond to student writing makes explicit how the expectation of ideal texts prevents teachers from genuinely reading students' texts. And Tobin (1991) argues that despite teachers' recognition that interpretations, reconstructions, and misreadings are unavoidable, "in practice, most of us cling to the notion that our readings of student essays are somehow objective," as if these texts have an "objective reality" (p. 336). Although this issue is only indirectly related to my concern here, I mention it nevertheless, for we need to be aware that our responses to students' papers, because they both illustrate and
model a kind of reading, are yet another, though more subtle, lesson we teach our students about what it means to read.

Given such an approach to instruction, how do students come to view reading? Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986a) describe the lessons that students learn about reading as a result of their classroom experiences. These students assume that in order to read, one must understand and remember all that has been read and that their inability to do so suggests that they are not good readers. They are focused on a concern for getting the definitive meaning. They come to believe that the difficulties, ambiguities, and confusions they are wrestling with are necessarily a sign of a problem that resides in them, and that because what resonated for them did not match with the answers expected, they cannot read. They come to understand that what they do seem to get is not important, for frequently it is the very associations that make the text come alive and stay with them that are left unacknowledged. They become afraid, they cease to take risks. Some of this is reflected in the following comment written by a Japanese graduate student who was assigned to work with a native speaker of English:

I have a student who is taking Japanese as a foreign language since last semester. He is having trouble learning the new language. While his co-students mastered basic writing and reading skills, he is unable to do so yet. His last tutor decided he has a learning disability. He himself admitted that he was categorized with a learning disability and waived to taking the SAT for that reason. I asked what that meant, and he said that he had to read something twice before he fully comprehends it. I thought perhaps I also suffer from this learning disability, because I sometimes need to read something a few times to understand it well.

It should be noted that these lessons about reading also teach students lessons about writing. It is no wonder that, as a result of these kinds of experiences with reading, students come to see writing as a matter of (re)presenting the right set of ideas or the correct interpretation; that students distrust and dismiss their own written attempts, trying to determine instead what the instructor wants; that they view their struggles with writing as a reflection of their inability to write; that they develop a deep-seated fear of writing. The irony, of course, is that the more difficulty students seem to experience, “the less reading and the more nonsense drills we typically arrange for them to do” (Smith, 1983, p. 5). So a cyclical process gets underway whereby students who have little

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1 The student texts that appear throughout this article were written by students attending my ESL composition courses and graduate courses on the teaching of writing.
insight into what reading means are excluded from the possibility of making this discovery.

READING AND WRITING AS THE MAKING OF MEANING

Reading, as we have come to understand it, in fact, has little to do with what we ask our students to do. The growing body of literature in reading theory and research in both L1 (see, e.g., Newkirk, 1986; Peterson, 1986; Smith, 1971) and L2 (see Barnett, 1989; Carrell, Devine, & Eskey, 1988; Grabe, 1991; Mikulecky, 1990; Wallace, 1988) has underlined the importance of recognizing that reading has as much to do with what the reader brings to the text and how the reader interacts with the text as with the text itself. The following excerpts represent the ways in which the process of reading has been characterized by writers whose work is situated in a range of disciplines but whose conceptualizations of reading reveal a remarkably similar perspective:

There is no such thing as a generic reader or a generic literary work. . . . The reading of any work of literature is, of necessity, an individual and unique occurrence involving the mind and emotions of some particular reader. (Rosenblatt, 1938, p. 34)

The understanding of a text has not begun at all as long as the text remains mute. But a text can begin to speak. When it does begin to speak, however, it does not simply speak its word, always the same, in lifeless rigidity, but gives ever new answers to the person who questions it and poses ever new questions to him [sic] who answers it. To understand a text is to come to understand oneself in a kind of dialogue. (Gadamer, 1976, p. 57)

At the center are the readers' responses . . . to the meanings they make and re-make as they read. (Atwell, 1987, p. 154)

Reading is usually thought to be a matter of discerning what is there, but . . . it is a matter of knowing how to produce what can thereafter be said to be there. Interpretation is not the act of construing but the act of constructing. Interpreters do not decode [readings]; they make them. (Fish, 1987, p. 226)

There is no meaning on the page until a reader decides there is. (Tierney & Pearson, 1983, pp. 568-569)

Much of the meaning understood from a text is really not actually in the text, per se, but in the reader. (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988, p. 79)

That is the terrible, wonderful power of reading: the texts we create in our own minds while we read—or just after we read—become part of
the life we believe we lived. . . [A]ll reading is autobiographical. (Murray, 1991, p. 74)

A piece of writing must be understood as a product of a person or persons . . . taking its meaning from the interpretive gestures of individual readers. (Scholes, 1982, p. 16)

Reading always involves critical perception, interpretation and rewriting what is read. (Freire, 1983, p. 11)

Reading, then, if it is to represent engaged and meaning-making activity, must allow for the ways in which readers contribute to and make connections with the text. Writing provides a unique opportunity for discovering and exploring these contributions and connections, for it allows the reader to dialogue with a text and find a particular way into it. Explicating the work of a number of reading theorists, Petrosky (1982) explains, “the only way to demonstrate comprehension is through extended discourse where readers become writers who articulate their understandings of and connections to the text in their responses” (p. 24).

Despite recent attempts to make connections between reading and writing, these efforts are such that we presume that reading is what makes it possible for us to write rather than the other way around. Note, for example, that whereas writing textbooks typically include reading material upon which writing assignments are based, it is rare for reading textbooks to include assignments that call for extended, open-ended written responses. Furthermore, when written assignments are included in reading textbooks, they invariably appear at the ends of units or chapters, thus reinforcing the notion that writing is done as a final activity after the text has been read, analyzed, worked through, rather than used as a means for understanding the text. We seem to assume a static and unidirectional effect for reading on writing, believing that exposure to reading texts provides us models, that reading provides so-called comprehensible input which, if acquired, will later be displayed in the writing produced, that reading provides ideas that can be used as a basis for writing one’s own text. Thus, reading continues to be viewed as necessarily preceding writing, to offer a paradigm to internalize, to act as a stimulant for writing, or to provide subject matter to write about. With any of these situations we assume that if students read, they will become adept at putting their thoughts on paper. Reading and writing are thus not fully integrated, and reading controls the writing. (Arguing for balanced integration, Silberstein, in press, cautions against a similar danger: having writing instruction dominate reading, “using reading [only] as grist for a writing mill.”)
Calkins (1986), whose work is primarily in children’s acquisition of literacy, describes how such a perspective influences the ways in which writing is now being introduced in reading classrooms.

Under the rubric of reading-writing connections, writing is being squeezed, stretched, and distorted to service existing reading programs. . . . In the name of reading-writing connections, writing is being treated as an elaborate ditto. (p. 234)

In other words, writing is being inserted into the reading program and is typically viewed as either reinforcing reading or taking away from reading time. Calkins questions whether these writing activities make a significant contribution to reading because they fail to take into account the genuine connections readers make as they read, because they don’t explore the reading and writing relationship provocatively enough. These writing activities keep hidden from developing readers/writers that one can find one’s reactions and responses to texts by reflecting on them through writing.

That writing, in fact, contributes to the development of reading has been demonstrated in elementary school classrooms in which writing becomes an opportunity to generate and explore meaning. In these classrooms, children with limited literacy and English language proficiency, even before they have learned to read (even before some of them can express themselves orally in English), write stories which become their first reading texts (Edelsky, 1982; Hudelson, 1984). This initiation into literacy provides children with the opportunities to develop and extend their understanding about text. It allows them to test out their “growing understanding of storiness, of wordness, of how one keeps ideas apart in writing . . . of how one uses writing to mean” (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984, p. 218). Writing, because it requires these beginning readers/writers to make decisions about purpose, sequence, and language, because it helps them to understand how and why texts are written, gives these learners insights into the goals, constraints, and concerns of authors, insights which they apply to their reading. Writing, because it helps learners understand that “everything they read is writing,” therefore needs to be recognized as “the foundation of reading,” and the “most basic way to learn about reading” (Hansen, 1987, p. 178).

Like the children in these “writing to read” classrooms, older students who have had little experience with reading or who have a limited understanding of what reading means can learn how print comes to represent meaning through writing. Adults, for example, who are in the process of acquiring both English language and literacy, can benefit from creating their own texts; these written
pieces, because they can provide a means through which students record their own experiences and consider their own realities, have greater resonance for them than those they are typically assigned to read and thus have the potential for becoming the basis for literacy development (Jones, 1991; Rigg, 1981; Rigg, 1991). Voices: New Writers for New Readers, a quarterly journal written by and for adults acquiring literacy (both native and nonnative speakers of English), is a powerful demonstration of how an appreciation for literacy begins with writing. In the case of ESL college composition, writing has been shown to affect the reading of literature when the writing assigned is fully integrated with and provides strategies for reflecting about literary texts (Spack, 1985). But even at more advanced levels, writing has much to contribute to reading. The following excerpt, written by a graduate student who was reflecting on his own development as a reader, demonstrates how applying writing strategies to his reading contributed to his development as a reader:

Until sometime after I began majoring in English, I was a poor reader. I treated each word on the page as a separate entity. Reading this way always caused me to become easily distracted. I’d restart continually (I’d read “Call me Ishmael” over and over), lose my concentration, etc. Once it had become clear to me by way of learning about the writing process, I applied a sort of free-writing approach to my reading. I forced my eyes to speed up, to move forward as a pen is commanded to during freewriting. I took in chunks of sentences at a time in the same way that phrases rolled off my pen when I was writing without having time to think about them. And slowly, without fully realizing it at the time, I began predicting where the author was going so that I didn’t need to attend to every word in order to get the meaning.

Becoming conscious of an approach to writing that could be brought to bear on his reading had a critical impact on this student’s process of reading. But there are more profound ways in which writing teaches reading. Because the process of writing shares much in common with the process of learning, it gives rise to the generation and reconceptualization of ideas that may not have been possible otherwise (Emig, 1977; Odell, 1980). The heuristic nature of writing allows one to discover and consider one’s stance, one’s interpretation, one’s immediate reactions to a text. Moreover, it makes these responses to a text overt, concrete, and tangible. Making students conscious of their own reactions to texts gives these readers the sense that experienced readers have when they read. Though we may not always respond in writing to our texts, when we underline portions of texts, mark them up, stop and verbalize our reactions, or scribble marginal comments, we are using
interpretive strategies that give us insight into our meaning making. What these actions represent is the complex intersection of who we are, what we know, and how we make sense.

By reading like a writer writes, students come to see that to understand a text is to come to understand oneself in a kind of dialogue, that understanding is initiated by a response, and that understanding means not so much taking away from a text as giving to the text what is not there. Writing in this way makes reading an activity of finding and making connections, of figuring out what speaks to the reader and why. Writing, because it gives rise to our own ways of probing and working with texts, is thus a way to construct, to compose the reading. Note the following account, written by a graduate student, which reveals the essential role that writing plays in composing her reading:

I never fully understand what I read until I write about it. This goes for school subjects, letters, and novels that I read in my spare time.

Every once in a great while when I read a novel I will write about it at great length in my journal. I am not sure whether it was the initial interest or subsequent writing about it but these novels are all among my favorites. For the most part I developed an intense interest with the main characters and the way the author developed them. In a sense I removed the characters from the author’s domain into my own world. How would this character deal with a situation in my own life? By writing about these characters I find out a tremendous amount about myself. I think mostly because by putting words on paper my voice appears. By discovering that voice, I have a better understanding of the work itself.

We read everyday, but how much do we maintain. I read the Sunday papers this week, and I have a vague understanding of what is happening in the world but the only articles I vividly remember are the articles I wrote my mother about.

Reading sparks something in the mind like a nighttime of fireflies. Associations both emotional and intelligent speed across the brain and we have a hard time capturing them. Groups of letters, words and paragraphs affect us with sound, meter, and meaning. We continue to read because we like the fireflies. The light and movement mesmerize us. When we try to focus on one firefly, it is elusive and difficult to catch. But by capturing it, and getting close to it we have a better understanding of what motivates it. We can only capture those sparks of imagination by putting them down on paper so they can be read and reread, and by rereading those thoughts we are usually moved to write further.

One cannot write without reading for as we write we read the words that pour, or dribble, on to the page. One can read without writing, but understanding is much deeper if response to that reading is done in writing.
In addition to giving us insight into the generative nature of reading, because writing has the inherent capacity to let us see our thoughts and to discover in that seeing alternatives and new perspectives, it allows us to experience reading as an evolving and speculative process. Writing invites us to entertain our initial responses, to offer tentative reactions, but then allows us to go back into the text and to revise these original readings. Thus, it helps us to understand that reading changes as we bring new responses to it, that reading is open to revision, that reading is work in progress. (See, e.g., Langer, 1990, whose study of students’ reading processes revealed the “changing stances” (p. 237) that readers applied as they attempted to understand texts and the recursive nature of these “stances.” See also Flower, 1988, whose study suggests that a text’s meaning changes as readers bring different purposes, goals, and assumptions to their reading.) Writing is a way to resee texts and so lets us grapple with uncertainties, reflect on the complexities, deal with the puzzlements, and offer approximative readings. By providing us a means for working out a reading, writing allows insights that may have been inaccessible or inchoate at the time that the text was read. As Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986a) point out, “The act of writing serves to justify, to repair or to speak into coherence an experience that, while it occurred, felt more like loss and confusion” (p. 17). By enabling us to formulate, judge, modify, extend, and refine our responses, writing helps dispel the notion that reading is a matter of getting something and getting it at the outset.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

What specific classroom approaches can give readers experiences with the dialogic and dynamic nature of reading? Students, for example, can keep reading journals or logs in which reactions are recorded and elaborated upon. Though journals or logs are by now common practice in writing courses, assigned as a method for fostering writing development, they need to be better understood as a means for promoting reading as well. The following illustrates one ESL student’s initial response to The Diary of Anne Frank (Frank, 1967). Note how this entry begins with a straightforward retelling, but then moves on to personal reflection, which helps strengthen the student’s understanding of the author and her reactions:

She started the diary with by sketching in a brief the story of her life. She started to introduce her family and the reasons why they had to hide. Also talk about the people who lived with her.
Anne feel strenge for the changes in her life who they left her house and now they had to be hidding for their life also she feel sad because they can’t go to anywhere and feel scare for her father and for her family.

When I read this pages I feel little upset because I don’t understand why is this world people think they are perfect and the others people had to be attack by words and action. In this case they paid to be Jewish with their life.

In addition to responding to texts, these responses can serve as evidence that reading is a constructive act; the various readings students bring to a text can be shared so that students come to be aware of the existence and legitimacy of multiple interpretations. By becoming aware of these other interpretations, they have yet new frameworks with which to go back and read the text. Naturally, these reactions need not be recorded only after texts have been read. On the contrary, students’ associations, questions, and thoughts, written in progress, make immediate the connections between reading and writing as well as inform and shape the text being read. Again, sharing these “process” reflections may shed new light on an understanding of the text.

Journals are a natural technique for dealing with literary texts, texts which by their very nature invite subjective and alternative interpretations (Spack, 1985). But this kind of written response needs to be applied as well to reading assigned across the disciplines. Even with reference to texts from which students are expected to derive the same information, as is the case in much school-based work, writing allows students to work through their readings so that their understanding comes closer to approximating what is assumed to be the intended meaning of these texts. Assumed is used here in order to underscore the notion that even so-called definitive interpretations are determined on the basis of a shared body of knowledge, both about information in the text and about how texts work, that we bring to a text. As Flower (1988) has pointed out, even “autonomous texts” (p. 544) are subject to readers’ individual interpretations. Given the inevitable influence that our own perspectives, backgrounds, and knowledge have on how we make meaning from texts, writing, sharing, and negotiating these approximate readings provides a means not only for understanding the content of texts but for learning about the reading process, that is, what makes it possible to locate information in a text, to determine a text’s meaning. Furthermore, giving students the opportunity to respond to discipline-specific texts in exploratory and tentative ways is more likely to make these texts accessible. As Elbow (1991) argues, in order to promote genuine
understanding of the academic discourse of assigned texts, students need to use informal, nonacademic writing to “render” rather than explain experience, to translate the “discourse of the textbook and the discipline into everyday, experiential, anecdotal terms”; to do otherwise is to keep students from “experiencing or really internalizing the concepts they are allegedly learning” (p. 137). A graduate student, writing about her growing awareness of the role writing can play in her understanding of an assigned text, echoes Elbow:

While reading, I’m saying to myself, I understand exactly what he’s saying, but if you ask me exactly what I agree with, I don’t know yet. I think I have to write it out myself before I can internalize the points I agree with. It’s still very fuzzy in my mind what I agree with. By writing, I have to consciously think out what I’ve read, and by writing it down, I internalize the meaning in my own words to make the ideas real to me—so that I own the words.

Furthermore, giving students the opportunity to write about what they find interesting/significant/moving/puzzling may help them realize that their understanding of complex texts evolves as they (re)read and that written reflection makes this understanding possible. Note the following entry, an excerpt taken from an ESL student’s journal responses to an assigned anthropology text:

The Chapter 6 “marriage” confuse me in some vocabulary, but I understood the rule of marriage of the kungs women, and I found it strange too. I think it is unfair for the parents to chose their daughters a husband very young, if they travel with them, hunting and gathering when the childrens are little, why don’t the parents keep their children with them until they are able to understand the meaning of marriage, or they are ready for it by their own, except give them away to be cared and maintained by a strange man.

I also found it touching in some aspects, for example when Nisa express her feelings about the times she was forced by her parents to live with Tashay, her husband, and she ran away many times to sleep in the bush. Also when she was living in his parents village, that she felt lonely and sad without her mother. It’s was obvious that she still needed her mother’s affection and care, but by that time the parents seem just to worry about somebody or a man to maintain her, not about her feelings.

Numerous examples of entries of this sort appear in The Journal Book (Fulwiler, 1987), a collection which convincingly demonstrates how individual and personal responses to texts assigned across academic content areas can be a more effective means for understanding and learning from these texts than traditional methods, such as note-taking. In one chapter, for example, a history professor discusses the impact that short journal entries, written in
response to the assigned reading, has on students’ engagement with the material. In yet another, an 11th grade American Civilization teacher describes the genuine involvement that is generated when her students are given the opportunity to react, hypothesize, interpret, and raise questions in their reading logs. It is clear that this form of written response fosters the kind of intellectual and meaningful activity that allows students to “enter” and engage these challenging texts. Finally, I include the following excerpt, which comes from the journal of a graduate student, not only because it reflects her realization that writing plays a critical role in reading assigned work, but because it illustrates how the very act of writing this entry helped her establish connections with what she read:

For those courses where we have had to write journals, I am infinitely more involved with the readings than those courses where no journal is required and I do my obligatory underlining and marginal writing. One course I am thinking about has an enormous amount of extremely technical reading. No journal. As a result, it’s almost as if the readings are one activity; class discussion is a separate activity and somehow, although the course is based on the readings, they are never effectively integrated into the course. In the article on reading, Freire says, “Reading always involves critical perception, interpretation, and re-writing what is read.” I have come to see that “re-writing” what one has read is essential in interpreting and understanding that text.

Double-entry or dialectical notebooks (Berthoff, 1981) provide another means for making us conscious of our reactions. In these notebooks, students copy passages that have particular significance for them in one column, and then respond to them in the other. The following represents the ways in which two ESL students, studying the history of racism and civil rights in the context of a course on the American Dream, responded to an autobiographical excerpt by Rosa Parks (reprinted in Gillespie & Singleton, 1991). On the left are the passages each student copied, on the right, their reactions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copied text</th>
<th>Reactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My mother had a mind of her own. She always held to the belief that none of us should be mistreated because of our race. (Gillespie &amp; Singleton, 1991, p. 372)</td>
<td>I like it because Rosa’s mother was like a symbol of a life freedom! Her mind was very independent and clear in front of society. I think Rosa inherited her mother’s courage. Rosa was as big as the Statue of Liberty in front of her black society that organized a boycott on December 5, after she was arrested because she opened her “eyes to the prize.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In reality we had to face the fact that we were not as free as the books said. What they taught us in school didn’t apply to us as a race. (Gillespie & Singleton, 1991, p. 371)

When Rosa Parks talks about African-American, I had a horrible feeling. No other immigrants can feel about that. Think if you were kidnapped to be a slavery from your country, how difficult the situation would be? “This is not the home of the blacks” is the poem written by Langston Hughes had expressed. Rosa had showed her progressive action 12 years before she arrested. But she was taken off the bus. I was shocked by the humiliating segregation law. You have to stand up and give the seat to somebody else because you are black. What a racism! When I was in China, even though there was discrimination to the north people who came down to the south, the south people at most could call them bad names and cheat them, but could never show out.

These passages not only reveal the particular association each student is making with the text, but demonstrate that the very act of writing these reactions may have generated connections to previous course content, in particular, the symbolic significance of the Statue of Liberty, readings from Eyes on the Prize (Cohen, 1987), and a poem by Langston Hughes (“Let America be America Again,” 1938/1992).

There are a number of possible variations on this approach. Students can summarize or react to certain passages in one column, and then reflect on these reactions in the other. Or, students can be asked to write about the associations a text calls forth after they have summarized and reacted to it in separate and self-contained pieces of writing (Bleich, 1986; Petrosky, 1982). Because so many students have a limited notion of what it means to read, providing them with opportunities to first summarize and retell what they have read makes obvious that we want them to engage in a very different process when they react to, associate with, and reflect upon texts. After an extensive and detailed summary of one section from Maxine Hong Kingston’s (1975) Woman Warrior, for example, one student wrote the following moving account:

I identify with her experience and feelings about voices. More than once in my life, I had to deal with that. Like her, before I picked up the
phone to talk to someone in English, I spent more than 15 minutes to prepare what I was going to say but when my fearful voice came out, word by word as a stutter and I forgot all. Moreover I’m now taking English speaking, listening class and I know how important voicing is. It’s very hard to practice. My throat once broken because the voices come out fearfully now gets hurt again.

Also I have shared with Kingston her experience of going to school. Right now, around me is silent too. I want to make friends but my English doesn’t allow me to do that, I’m afraid of asking people and of being asked question as well, so I keep quiet and do things by myself. I’m always thinking of my old friends and my own happy, lovely world I left behind. (I had studied chemistry for 4 years in college in Vietnam)

For 4 years, my class was home and my friends were sisters, brothers and now the more I think of them, the more I feel lonely. Got into the lab, looked around, I dreamed to see them, to hear them in my own language, but only strangers and only English. More silence covered me up.

Yet another possibility is to ask students to mark certain passages or insert marginal notations or some other form of reflective comment as they read, just as experienced readers often do, and then to go back to these passages and explore in writing why they think these passages resonated for them. For example, after noting a particular passage in *Lost in Translation*, in which the author, Eva Hoffman (1989), describes her “spontaneous flow of inner language,” (p. 107) one student wrote the following:

I read and reread it many times. It had given me a strange feeling. I also have interior language, interior image sometime in my life but I could never write it down as she did, even in my own language.

This form of response allows students to consider, weigh, and interpret their reading and gives rise to reactions that they may not have been aware of. It allows them to have a conversation with the author and become actively involved in the reading. Students not only come to realize what each viewed as important, what represented key moments for them, but why. When the same strategy is applied to passages that students found confusing or difficult, not only do students come to see the legitimacy of raising questions about texts (a powerful alternative to answering questions about texts), but they may discover that going back to and writing about these passages can help them work through their confusions or difficulties. Furthermore, because each reader may have responded to a different passage in the text, students can understand the reader-dependent nature of reading and that what speaks to each of us (or does not) may be different.
Students can be made aware of their associations with texts before they have read them if they are asked to write about experiences that enable and contribute to their interpretations. Asking them to write about an experience that figures in a text they are about to read not only helps students explain the matter to themselves but sets up a connection, a readiness that may not have been established otherwise. For example, Hudelson (1984) illustrates how bilingual children learn by brainstorming and writing about the content they are about to study before they read their textbook, thus establishing a connection, a set of expectations, and background knowledge that facilitates comprehension. ESL textbooks by Raimes (1992), Spack (1990), and Withrow, Brookes, and Cummings (1990) are notable for the various ways in which students are invited to explore their understanding of and associations with themes and topics that arise in the readings, not so much before they read these texts, but in order to read them. Fulwiler's (1987) book, too, provides examples of the benefits of writing about academic subjects before reading about them. In a recent ESL writing course, prior to our consideration of civil rights in the United States, students wrote about thoughts and associations related to this issue. One Chinese student, for example, wrote about the 1989 demonstration that took place in Tiananmen Square, while a Vietnamese student recounted a folktale that her grandmother had told her.

Inviting students to consider and weigh their own ideas first demonstrates that what they bring to the reading not only is a valid perspective but enables them to better understand, analyze, take issue with the perspective that they read about. Asking students to explore issues in writing before they read assigned texts makes it possible for them to approach the reading from a position of authority. Because they are allowed to bring their own experience, knowledge, and cultural background into play, they can approach the authors they subsequently read as other voices (rather than definitive authorities) to which they add their own. The ways in which students weave these voices together add depth, richness, and particularity to their writing, and in so doing, point to the problematic nature of setting up dichotomies between personal and academic discourse (Elbow, 1991). The following, for example, represents the conclusion of an essay in which the student does not merely retell the Vietnamese folktale (which she wrote about prior to our consideration of civil rights issues) but revises it in light of the critical perspective she has developed:

I remember a story which my grandmother told me in my childhood. “A long time ago, people are the same color and live lovely together. Some
of them are lazy and some others are gluttonous. One day they gather and bake a cake. The gluttonous ones eat their part of the cake when it is still not well-done yet. So the color of their skin changes to white. Meanwhile, the lazy ones eat their part of the cake when it is burned. And their skin color changes to black.” Of course, it is just a popular story of my childhood. But after studying the issue of Blacks and Whites in class, everything changed in my mind. I felt bad for this unfair world. If you ask me my dream, I would say that I dream one day the color of skin changes back to that of a long time before, so all people may gather and make a cake again, but eat the cake together at the same time.

By initially exploring her own values and associations in writing, she is able to (re)consider her text with reference to those which she subsequently reads, thus partaking in the kind of dialogic thinking and active interpretation that is critical to the development of reading/writing (Spellmeyer, 1989). Finally, writing about and considering issues, themes, or concepts before reading about them prepares students to view texts with “a writer’s eye” (McQuade & Atwan, 1991, p. iii), to appreciate authors’ perspectives and decisions, to read, in other words, like a writer.

Students can come to appreciate the ways in which readers use predictions to make meaning by writing speculatively about what will happen in a text and then comparing these predictions with those of other students and with the original text. Written predictions of this sort literally transform student writers into authors of the text. This activity also gives students insight into how and why the texts they themselves write produce expectations in readers. It thus further underlines the fundamental principles that reading involves active negotiation between reader and text and that who the reader is and what he or she already knows affect that negotiation.

One final suggestion is that we sequence assignments around readings so that students are guided to address these readings from different perspectives. For example, before I assign excerpts from Terkel’s (1972) Working, I ask students to write about their recollections of and reactions to their own work experiences, thus helping them uncover what they already know and think. In addition to reading Terkel and relating his findings to the students’ own pieces, students conduct their own interviews in order to explore the relationship between work and satisfaction. The essays they finally write require them to reconsider both their initial written papers and Terkel’s interviews in light of their own interview data. Students are thus “pushed back” into the readings and asked to view them in the context of a different framework and to rethink their original responses. And because these recursive
assignments encourage the review of students' own previous writing, students’ texts become legitimate texts to consider and examine alongside the published readings they are assigned. Other suggestions for ways in which to build on and sequence assignments can be found in *Ways of Reading* (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1987), an anthology of readings for students, and *Facts, Artifacts and Counterfacts* (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1986b), a reference for teachers. These exemplary works demonstrate how a dialectical relationship is established through reading and writing, how reading and writing can inform, be a source for understanding, and be brought to bear upon one another.

These instructional strategies are suggestive of the ways in which we can take advantage of writing and its inherent possibilities to teach students not only about writing, but about reading, to teach them that “any reading requires ‘writerly’ activities from the reader” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 171). Given the interdependence of these two language processes, the overriding implication is that the teaching of reading and writing cannot be separated nor can they be sequenced in linear fashion so that reading necessarily precedes writing. As Scholes (1985) has argued, reading and writing are “complementary acts” (p. 20); in the same way that writing a text necessarily involves reading it, reading a text requires writing a response to it. Thus, just as the teaching of writing should involve the teaching of reading (as it has been conceptualized here), the teaching of reading is necessarily the teaching of writing (Bartholomae, 1986). Just as reading provides “comprehensible input” for writing, writing can contribute comprehensible input for reading. Just as students “need to become better readers” in order “to become better writers,” as Spack (1988, p. 42) argues, they can become better readers by becoming better writers. This realization is critical, given the segregated ways reading and writing are addressed in ESL research and pedagogy, and given the negligible role writing continues to play in works on second language reading, even when these works underline the active and reader-dependent nature of reading.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The writing activities I have pointed to are ways to enter the text in an organic and powerful way and help students to understand that the reader acts upon and gives meaning to the text, that reading is a process of composing. These activities demonstrate how reading shares much in common with writing, that, for example, both are affected by purpose and goal (Flower, 1988), that both
involve recursiveness, that both are malleable and open to (re)interpretation, that both require experiencing a “felt sense” (Perl, 1980, p. 365). Note how Rosenblatt’s (1978) characterization of reading applies as well to writing:

Nor does all this activity . . . go on in a simple linear progression. As the text unrolls, there is not only the cumulative building up of effect through the linking of remembered earlier elements to the new ones. There is sometimes a backward flow, a revision of earlier understandings, emphases, or attitudes; there may even be the emergence of a completely altered framework or principle of organization. Sometimes this very act of revision of the framework becomes an important aspect of “the meaning” of the work. (pp. 60-61)

Furthermore, because these activities allow students to actively engage and grapple with texts, to explore how and why texts affect them, students can make discoveries about what other readers do with texts they compose. They come to realize that if reading involves a reconstruction, they must help guide readers of their own texts in that reconstruction, this despite the fact that even with writers’ attempts to create “autonomous texts” (Flower, 1988, p. 544), readers will nevertheless reconstruct a text on the basis of their “alternative hypotheses.” They can begin to imagine their own writing as potential reading. This gives them insight into the way reading and writing work in tandem to promote and enhance one another. In other words, writing like a reader becomes inextricably bound up with reading like a writer.

Writing, because it gives students opportunities to discover that reading is an active and generative process, teaches students a critical lesson about reading. It allows students not just to learn about something in a particular text, but to learn about how one learns. This is what Bruner (cited in Raimes, 1983) meant when he described as essential to learning the act of “climb[ing] on your own shoulders to be able to look down at what you’ve just done and then to represent it to yourself” (p. 537). Writing, because it allows us to represent to ourselves our learning, our ways of making meaning, teaches the most profound lesson about how we read, write, and use language, about what it means to know. It teaches us, as Polanyi (1958) has put it, that “into every act of knowing, there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being known” (p. viii). It is when students come to understand reading and writing in this critical way, as acts of knowing, that they come to see that reading lets us know writing, and writing lets us know reading.
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