

Series Editors' Preface

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Reading and writing are indivisible. If nothing were written, what would we read? If no one read, why would we write? When we enter the world of literacy, we receive written words from others and respond with our own. Literacy is a reciprocal, two-sided game. At literacy's birth, the scribes who recorded were the scribes that read. Yet, we divide reading and writing in school, in instruction, in assessment, in the professions of scholars, and in research. Even in identities, some think of themselves as readers, others as writers.

Nonetheless, as teachers of writing we cannot keep reading out of the picture. Students write about what they read. To revise they must read their own texts and adopt the positions of their readers. In peer collaboration and peer review, students read each other's work, and in the process of giving and receiving feedback, experience the effects their writing has on others. An ability to read critically one's own and others' writing helps cultivate metacognitive reflection and rhetorical awareness that facilitates writing development and the transfer of writing knowledge. We sense that the best writers have wide experiences as readers.

The assumption that reading is a fundamental skill learned once and for all errs in the same ways as the assumption that writing is a fundamental skill learned once and for all. Our reading schemas develop in tandem with our writing schemas. As reading scholar Frank Smith (2004) described, experienced readers read in relation to specifications informed by genre knowledge. Knowledge of these specifications, among other things, allows us to anticipate textual moves and to predict rhetorical cues that enable our constructions (and critiques) of meaning. As writers, we use our knowledge of these genre specifications to guide readers or, in some cases, to surprise them.

By dividing reading and writing, however, we minimize the interactive roles of readers and writers in the composing process and in their co-construction of meaning. We deny students the opportunity to read as writers—that is, to pay attention to rhetorical choices and effects and to consider the texts they read (print or digital) as having *been written* under certain conditions within certain constraints to achieve certain purposes. Such a division between reading and writing contributes to distinctions between production and interpretation that have defined English studies and that have created hierarchies between literature/cultural studies and composition/rhetoric.

The need to connect reading and writing is greater than ever as students negotiate new information technologies and a multi-mediated world. Visual culture and the proliferation of multimedia texts have transformed literacy practices, as students learn to critically “read” visual texts and images and to participate in fluid, continuous online spaces that blur boundaries between reading and writing roles and redefine reading/writing interactions—rhetorically, spatially, and temporally. Through social networking sites, wikis, websites, blogs, bulletin boards, and digital video compositions, students are taking up new, multiple identities as readers and writers, making it even more important for teachers to understand the dynamic relationship between reading and writing.

This volume draws together many resources to encourage us to consider the need to reconnect reading and writing, moving from an historical and theoretical overview of reading-writing approaches in rhetoric and composition to more global, international perspectives on reading and writing instruction. Recognizing that reading and writing are social practices that are embedded in particular educational contexts, the book provides wide-ranging coverage of reading and writing in multiple instructional settings, from writing across the curriculum, to basic writing, to second language writing, to K–12 classrooms, and to libraries.

The book not only explores reading-writing connections within various contexts, but also from the varied perspectives of “new literacies” or multiliteracies, paying attention to both the influence of traditional print texts in literacy instruction (e.g., composition textbooks’ treatment of reading) and the role of information and digital literacies in research-based writing (e.g., shifts in accessing, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating sources). Importantly, the book reminds us of

the need to collaborate with our colleagues in libraries, in secondary schools, across the disciplines, and beyond the U.S. as we continue to explore and cultivate connections between reading and writing. With its coverage of multiple sites for reading-writing instruction, overviews of various theoretical and practical approaches, and inclusion of diverse perspectives on reading-writing (from professional policy statements to standardized tests to research studies on reading-writing relationships), this volume encourages greater understanding of the synergies that link reading and writing, making a compelling case for shaping curricular approaches that reconnect reading and writing, recognizing them as indivisible, reciprocal, meaning-making activities.

This volume marks a landmark in the Reference Guides to Rhetoric and Composition as Anis Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff join me as co-editors of the series. Their deft work on this volume confirms what great additions they are. The series looks forward to a long and bright future.

—*Charles Bazerman*