Abstract

Due to increased pressures to raise scores on high stakes tests, teachers of emergent writers often focus on literacy sub-skills that do not provide authentic experiences with language and writing. Early literacy instruction must be designed around the interconnected modes of symbolic representation of oral language, drawing and writing to develop critical thinking skills and deep literacy learning. Additionally, learning environments must support the development of emergent writers as they negotiate their understandings and identities within unique socio-cultural worlds. Through a digital presentation and collaborative experience, this project aims to inform administrators and teachers on the natural literacy development of emergent writers and influence their instructional practices toward a more effective and respectful way of teaching writing to children. The project presents current research and literature on oral language development, the use of storytelling in the composing process, the role of drawing for emergent writers, and the role of the environment in literacy learning. Instructional methods are explored that honor the needs and development of emergent writers.