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## Indirect Models Of Reading To Develop Descriptive Writing

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**Keywords : Indirect Model, Reading, Descriptive Writing**

### Introduction

Reflecting on the impact of reading-writing connection in second language instruction Tierney (1992), notices a shift in interest from students' joint reading- writing involving a single source to work with multiple texts. This kind of process is similar to synthesis writing where important insights and information are drawn together in a coherent and directive way from a variety of source texts.

A comparison of earlier research (1970s) with more recent research (1980s) made by Tierney and Shanahan in terms of classroom methodology showed some underlying constructs that exist on the ongoing thinking that readers and writers pursue.

Some of the pedagogical constructs that reflect a change in the notions of viewing reading and writing include:

- The common features shared by reading and writing.
- How readers and writers transact with one another.
- What readers and writers learn when reading and writing are connected

The first construct addresses the extent to which reading and writing involve similar, shared, and overlapping linguistic, cognitive, or social resources. The second construct considers how readers and writers transact with one another as they negotiate the making of meaning. The third construct explores the thinking and learning that occurs as learners shift back and forth from reading to writing according to goals they pursue in different subject areas such as science, social studies, and literature. (p. 246)

The above mentioned studies focus on the shift in affecting reading - writing connections. Especially in terms of various 'transactions' or 'interactions' and 'outcomes' taking place not only in the cognitive dimensions of reading writing but also with the outside influences identified by Tierney and Shanahan as 'social resources'.

The Indirect models of reading:

Reading writing relationships focused on the belief in the ideas that "the thinking associated with reading and writing is both dynamic and complex. The nature of thinking is apt to vary depending on changes in the learner's purposes and the context for learning as well as the content being addressed.

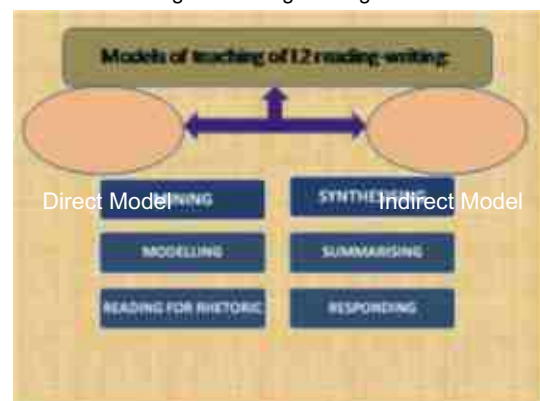
The indirect model works on a belief in the processes of language acquisition, whereby learning occurs on its own when students are presented with what Krashen (1984) calls comprehensible input. Within this framework of reading for writing, the input itself and the conditions under which students encounter it take precedence over what students actually do with the input, unlike in the case of a directive strategy like rhetorical reading, where students have a conscious task to perform.

Krashen, states that comprehensible input plays a significant role in second language acquisition, which is similar to the

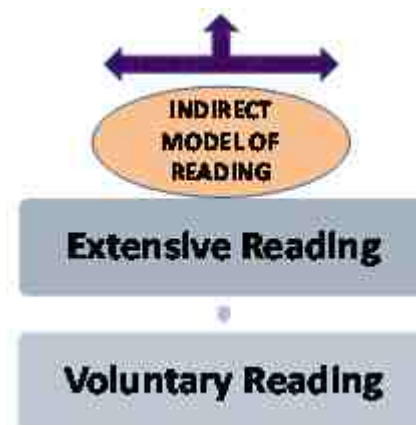
necessity of reading in the process of acquisition of writing competence. In part, this point of view suggests that writing instruction focusing strictly on writing will have a limited effect, as writing will be seen out of context to some extent without some emphasis on the knowledge of writing that reading provides. In that sense, Krashen reinforces the general notion of reading-writing connections, with input from one skill (reading) helping shape the development of the other (writing).

There are two primary and overlapping frameworks in which this can occur: extensive reading and voluntary reading. Both operate on the principle that reading must be seen by students to be a learning activity without any inhibitions. These two frameworks lies in how students encounter the reading material and what they do with it.

Models of Teaching L2 Reading- Writing



The Indirect Models of Reading



**Extensive reading**

The core idea of extensive reading is to enable the students benefit most from significant amounts of reading in the target language.

Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) note that extensive reading-most notably is reading of a voluntary nature which may dramatically enhance the development of linguistic skills, especially those related to comprehension and production of a written text. In this connection, Cumming (1989) feels that "extensive reading and other purposeful uses of a second language appear necessary to facilitate the long-term development of effective writing performance" (p. 126). Tsang (1996), for example, found in a study of secondary school students in Hong Kong that an extensive reading scheme improved general knowledge and thus helped develop content in writing. It also exposed students to appropriate models of construction, agreement, tense, number, and word order function, which strengthened their use of the language" (p. 213).

**Voluntary reading:**

As the term free/voluntary reading suggests, students are left more to their own devices than in extensive reading schemes; that is, reading occurs outside the classroom contexts unlike extensive reading (where students may choose their own reading materials according to their own interests. In contrast to free/voluntary reading students usually engage in reading outside the classroom and under less structured conditions than in extensive reading, though the classroom can be a starting point for such reading (Dupuy, Tse, & Cook, 1996). What is crucial in this approach is "the pleasure principle." Called by Krashen.

It has been established by researchers such as (Benesch 2001: et al) that reading, especially free voluntary reading, is a powerful means of developing second language competence providing a vital source of linguistic and rhetorical input for writing, so that writing assignments should be seen to start in acts of reading and to be sustained and informed by acts of reading, rather than to follow such acts. Writing assignments involving reading and writing about more than one source text provide richer contexts for linking the acts of reading and writing than do those involving a single source text. Based on this premise the tasks have been identified which promote develop

**Significance of teaching Descriptive writing and Task Administration:**

. In an academic context students require to describe processes, methods and procedures. For example they are expected to use appropriate language in explaining how a particular procedure is carried out, such as description of stages involved in extracting drinking water from sea and describing phases in paper making, analyzing and operating a system, describing types of soil etc. Task administration to the sample groups is carried out in 6 classes of 2 hrs.30 minute duration each. The sample tasks are administered to two groups, group-1 from B- Tech stream (40 students) and group-2 (40 students) from MBA and MCA stream

**Designing Sample Material to teach Descriptive Writing:**

In this section an attempt has been made to primarily help the students learn classification and description of a process based text. The tasks help the students structure, organize and explain a process. Task -1 enables the students learn the stages involved in paper making. Task -2 relates to the process of sorting out letters drawing attention of the students to the use of passive sentences. Task-3 relates to the cause and effect of describing a process.

Rubrics to the students: Tasks based on description require students to compare, contrast analyse and find similarities and differences. They are also expected to determine the implications inherent in the similarities and differences. Such tasks are also useful for examining cause-and-effect

relationships which further enable the students practice and master the rhetorical patterns pertaining to technical and scientific texts.

Task -1- Describing a Process or device

Objectives: To enable the students classify a text based on the types

- To enable the students describe a process, explain, and define concepts
- Describing the stages in a process using appropriate structures and collocations.

Given below is a jumbled text describing stages in the process of making paper. Arrange and title the stages in proper sequence.

Papermaking : Paper is widely used across the world. Printing is of little use without paper. The process of paper making in short involves flattening of a mesh of interlocking plant fibres, mainly of wood and cotton. Paper making also involves reducing a plant to its fibres, and then aligning them and coating the fibres with materials such as glues, pigments and mineral fillers.

Stage -1 Transport Stage -2 Debarking

Stage -3 Pulping Stage -4 Mixing

Stage -5 Forming the web Stage -6 Pressing and drying  
'Paper making'

The pulp goes to the mixer, where materials are added to improve the quality of the paper. The additives include white fillers such as china clay, size for water-proofing and coloured pigments. The mixer beats the fibres into a smooth pulp.

Trees are felled and then transported to paper mills as logs.

The bark has first to be stripped off the logs without damaging the wood.

Belts move the web between the press rolls, which remove more water and compress the paper.

Pulping reduces the wood to slurry of loose fibres in water. The logs are first sliced into chips and then treated with chemicals in a digester. These dissolve the lignin binding the wood fibres together. Alternatively, machines may grind the logs in water to produce pulp. The pulp is then bleached.

The damp web moves through the dryer, where it passes between hot cylinders and felt-covered belts that absorb water. It then passes through the calendar stacks before being wound on reels or cut into sheets. Liquid pulp is fed from the flow box onto the mesh belt. Water drains through the holes in the mesh; the drainage is accelerated by suction. The dandy roll presses the fibres together into a wet ribbon known as a web.

Source (Adapted from Rhetorical Functions in Academic Writing: Describing processes

[Www.uefap.com/writing/function/process.htm](http://www.uefap.com/writing/function/process.htm))

**Task-2**

In this section the students learn about the use of passive sentences which are widely used in describing a process

Read the text describing the process of sorting out letters paying attention to the passive verbs that have been highlighted.

'Process of Sorting Letters'

First of all, letters and packets are collected in bags from pillar boxes, post offices and firms, in post office vans. They are then taken to the sorting office, where the bags are emptied and the letters separated from the packets. Following this step, the letters are put through machines so that the stamps can be cancelled. In this process the date and place of sorting are put over the stamps on each envelope. In the next stage, the sorting of the letters takes place, according to the country they are addressed to. This is done by placing them in the appropriate pigeon hole. Subsequently, the letters are taken from the pigeon holes and placed in baskets, which are then put onto a conveyor belt.



While on this conveyor belt, the baskets are directed to the appropriate secondary sorting section by means of coding pegs. At the secondary sorting frames, the letters are put into towns in the county. Later, the letters are tied in bundles and a label is put on showing the towns they are addressed to. Finally, the letter bundles are placed in bags, which have the Post Office seal, Post Office Railway number and Destination Code number on them, and then these are sent to the railway station.

Source: (Adapted from 'The Penguin book of the physical world': London, 1976)

Now complete the table using appropriate passives from the text.

Letters and packets	<i>are collected</i>
Post bags	
Stamps	
Baskets	
Bundles	

Task-3 : Here are some guidelines to be followed in describing a process broadly categorized into three stages. These stages are not standardized but negotiable from time to time based on the type of the process described. Read the text (Task-1 and 2) and complete the blanks with appropriate verb forms required.

Describing a Method how something is done? (Describes the process of doing something)

- First of all, letters and packets (are collected in bags from pillar boxes).
- This is done by placing them-----

- The baskets are directed to the appropriate secondary sorting section by means of-----

Describing Position where/when something happens?

- They are then taken to the sorting office, where the bags are emptied.

- The pulp goes to the mixer,-----

Describing Cause and Effect what /the result of the process?

- Following this step, the letters are put through machines so that -----

(Hints: the stamps are cancelled).

**Findings/ Conclusion**

The findings revealed that the students had a rich exposure to read a variety of text types that are used to promote reading-writing skills. The students worked on the texts related to 'description of process of sorting letters', 'paper making', 'functioning of refrigerators', functioning and description of tractors etc. However, in this paper, of the several tasks that have been tried out with the students pursuing professional courses of engineering, management etc., only three tasks have been included for discussion. Students used strategies of comparing, contrasting, defining and classifying. However, the objectives of the study have been partially fulfilled due to constraints of time and completion of syllabus.

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