CHAPTER ONE

BECOMING LIFELONG READERS AND WRITERS: THE GOAL OF THE INTERMEDIATE LITERACY PROGRAM

The longer I write and read, the more I learn; writing and reading are lifelong apprenticeships...
—DONALD M. MURRAY

The first years of school establish the essential foundation of literacy that enables all future literacy achievement. In the intermediate grades, students use this foundation to develop a full, rich, wide-ranging facility. They assume the roles of readers and writers that will serve them throughout their lifetime.

As teachers, we see our intermediate students as they are, but we also have a vision for what they can become. Our high expectations foster their self-confidence, encourage their success, and enable them to achieve high goals.

Becoming Readers and Writers

What does it mean to become a reader? a writer? In our work with students, we try to help them become readers and writers in the fullest sense. We want them not only to learn to read and write but also to learn the many purposes of reading and writing. We want literacy to become an integral part of their lives.

Reading
Learning to read in the fullest sense means developing decoding skills, but much more. It means becoming readers who:

- Read voluntarily and often.
- Read a wide variety of materials.

- Have confidence in themselves as readers.
- Present themselves as readers to others.
- Read to become informed on a wide range of topics.
- Read to improve their lives.
- Read to have satisfying and rewarding vicarious experiences.
- Read to expand their world beyond the here and now.
- Collect books and refer to favorites again and again.
- Recommend books to others.
- Talk with others about what they read.
- Know authors and illustrators, genres, and styles.
- Develop preferences and constantly expand them.
- Reflect on their reading.
- Make connections between and among the things they have read.
- Think critically about what they read.

Readers do not read only when they are required to do so. Readers find time to read and find ways of acquiring good material. Research documents the benefits of wide reading. A study of fourth graders (Pinnell, Pikulski & Wixson 1995) revealed that students who read fluently and who reported reading at home also scored higher on standardized reading achievement tests. Students in the higher achievement groups were reading many more words per day, more minutes per day, and more hours per week than the students in the lower achievement groups, who spent very little time reading very few words. In general,
those who read more, and with more purpose and satisfaction, succeed more all the way around.

**Writing**

In our society, more people see themselves as readers than as writers. Perhaps you feel quite comfortable describing yourself as a "reader" but do not believe you are a "writer." Learning to write in the fullest sense means more than developing composing and spelling skills. It means becoming writers who:

- Write voluntarily and often.
- Write in a wide variety of genres.
- Have confidence in themselves as writers.
- Present themselves as writers to others.
- Use writing as a tool for thinking.
- Write to communicate on personal and professional levels.
- Write to share experiences or information with others.
- Are sensitive to other writers, noticing techniques and styles.
- Invite comments on, responses to, and critiques of their writing.
- Draw on literary knowledge as a resource for their writing.
- Use organized sets of information as a resource for their writing.
- Explore favorite topics and genres.

Atwell (1985), as a teacher, regards her role as a teacher as helping students approach written language as "insiders" who have their own intentions (topics, purposes), use "insider" language (draft, edit), and ask for advice that they may choose to accept or reject. She cautions that it takes time to do the thinking, writing, and talking that will welcome students into this insider role. A "writing program" is really a way of life:

- Writing workshop is perpetual—day in, year out—like breathing, but sometimes much, much harder. We're constantly gathering ideas for writing, planning, writing, conferring, and seeing our writing get things done for us in our real worlds. (p. 150)

- This is our goal for our students: to engage in a literate life from childhood through adolescence and adulthood.

**The Intermediate Grades: A Time of Change**

In the intermediate grades, students move from childhood to adolescence. As teachers, we encourage them to find their voices as writers and refine their tastes as readers. Some of these students will develop confidence, skill, and style as writers and find it easy to express themselves; others will complete writing assignments with little interest or confidence. Some will enjoy reading and do it voluntarily; others will read only when required. Continuous good teaching can make the critical difference.

Effective literacy programs foster active, responsible learning. They help students begin to use literacy as a tool that gives them the power to find the information they need, to express their opinions, to take positions. Active learners have their own goals and are engaged over time. They recognize the teacher's requirements but also recognize that fulfilling these requirements will help them achieve their goals.

**Diverse Interests and Needs**

In every grade, we find great diversity among students—physically, intellectually, and emotionally. Indeed, the range of reading ability tends to become wider at each successive grade level as a result of the students' varied experiences. Their literacy backgrounds reflect their homes and communities as well as their previous years of schooling. As intermediate-grade teachers we appreciate this rich diversity; it enhances the literary culture that we create in our classrooms. At the same time, we recognize the challenges of teaching students who, each year, are experiencing life-changing transitions.

Effective teaching in the intermediate grades begins with what we know about learners and their literacy journeys. By the time students enter third grade, they have developed expectations for texts. They have broadened their world through reading and technology. They have developed tastes and interests as readers as well as confidence as readers and writers.

Far more than primary children, intermediate students can be independent, manage their own learning, and follow their own interests. They may have
resonated to a particular author’s style; they may have found themselves in books, recognizing their own feelings, fears, and emotions. As writers, they have begun to develop voice. They know more about the possibilities for writing. Certainly, they have become much more social. Intermediate students make connections among areas of learning. They use literacy in many ways to try to make sense of their world. Their peers are rapidly becoming more interesting—and probably more influential—than the adults in their lives.

Students in the intermediate grades are also undergoing some important cognitive changes. George and Lawrence (1982) have identified six dimensions of cognitive development that begin in the primary years and continue into adolescence. Students change:

1. From concrete to more abstract ways of thinking.
2. From an egocentric perspective to a social perspective.
3. From narrowly defined ideas about time and space to broader ideas.
4. From simplistic views of human motivation to a more complex understanding of people.
5. From reliance on simple maxims or guidelines to an internalized philosophy of morality.
6. From simple concepts to higher-order conceptualizing.

Year by year, as students learn through experiences, they can understand increasingly complex ideas. Reading and writing are part of that growth.

**Broadening Writing Abilities**

Intermediate students who have experienced a rich primary writing program already see themselves as writers. Although they are just starting to develop a writing process, they have produced many pieces of writing; some have been edited and published. They have explored a range of topics, appropriate to their own experience and knowledge. By the end of third grade, they can write many words automatically and have become composers who can think about their ideas while “encoding” written language. They no longer have to attend so closely to the act of writing. Handwriting has become automatic, and they can write many words quickly without even thinking about the spelling, although they are still developing their knowledge of spelling principles and how words “work.” And while they may still wrestle with more complex sentences, basic punctuation is in place.

**Dimensions of Change**

Some intermediate students struggle with basic writing skills and require special attention, but most are on the verge of greatly broadening their writing abilities in several dimensions (see Britton et al. 1975).

**Skills**

Intermediate learners are still developing basic writing skills, including spelling and punctuation. They use more multisyllable words and become more careful with word choice. As they write longer and more complex pieces, they encounter more demanding uses of punctuation. They begin to look at paragraphing and the need to create sections or chapters. Conventions such as capitalization and grammatical forms become automatic.

Intermediate students are also becoming more sophisticated in planning and organizing the texts they want to write. They vary sentence structure, learning to write in first, second, or third person and to use present, past, and future tenses with accuracy. They are becoming familiar with literary techniques such as figurative language, foreshadowing, and point of view.

**Function**

Increasingly, intermediate students learn to write for their own purposes. They broaden their ability to distinguish the three functions of mature writing:

1. **Transactional writing** is language to accomplish tasks and to inform, advise, or instruct others. Intermediate students learn to explain and explore ideas, transact business, record and synthesize information, persuade others to adopt a certain point of view, and express theories. They center much of their writing on the content areas, including reports that emphasize accurate and specific references.

2. **Expressive writing** is language “close to the self” (p. 90). Students write with a free flow of ideas that is relatively unstructured. They may “think aloud,” as in writing a diary or journal; or they may write personal letters or e-mail as part of ongoing
communication. They are writing for themselves or for a known individual or group.

3. Poetic writing involves using written language as art. The writer may express feelings (as in expressive writing), but the feelings are arranged and ordered into a pattern that is pleasing in itself. Poetic writing includes poetry, of course, but also other writing that has a poetic dimension, such as short stories, novels, poetic essays. The difference between poetic and transactional writing is similar to the difference between a painting and a map (p. 90). The poetic writing pleases and satisfies the writer, and, as a result, the reader. It stands alone and does not become dated information. Poetic writing need not be accurate; in fact, it may involve fantasy and imagination.

Mature writers blend these functions as they set about creating their unique pieces of writing, but the full repertoire is in place. As intermediate-grade teachers, we want to create a rich and lively curriculum that inspires students to use all functions of written language.

**Audience**
The in the intermediate grades, students learn to write for many different audiences. In general, they move from audiences “close at hand” on the following continuum to those farther distant:

- **Self.** A child writes for himself and only he can truly understand it.
- **Teacher.** A student writes to the teacher as a trusted adult (as in journal entries) or as an evaluator (for a graded paper). The student may write to demonstrate particular skills.
- **Wider Known Audience.** The student writes to communicate with or inform a variety of readers he knows. He may adopt the role of the expert or serve as a member of a collaborative group. The writing must be clear enough to communicate to a wide range of readers, but the writer has good insights as to their knowledge and interests.
- **Wider Unknown Audience.** The student writes for a public that he can only imagine. The student’s published work may go to a well-defined though unknown audience or to an unspecified audience. The writing is expected to exist beyond the present and to inform or entertain others who encounter it.

**Topic or Subject**
We all write best about what we know, and students in the intermediate grades have access to an expanding range of topics and subjects. It is still necessary, however, to involve students in concrete experiences before expecting them to write about their knowledge. Intermediate students who have explored a wide range of texts can write informational pieces on many topics. Also, as they learn about other times and places, they can begin to create fiction that transcends the present time and settings they have personally experienced.

**Form or Genre**
One of the critical skills writers develop is the ability to determine the appropriate form, or genre, within which to place their ideas. Most intermediate writers are well on their way to producing narrative texts with a beginning, a series of events, and an end. They may organize longer narratives into chapters, and use dialogue to reveal characters and make texts more interesting. They are also experienced journal or diary writers.

In the intermediate grades, students greatly expand their knowledge of the characteristics of genres and their ability to produce them in writing. They read material in many genres and often “borrow” the style or structure of favorite writers to produce their own pieces. They can recognize the difference between narrative and expository writing, and create a table of contents, headings, diagrams, definitions of terms, and an index. In a rich writing program students may create:

- **Functional writing,** such as lists, memos, journal or diary entries, business letters, notes, records and observations (as of experiments), advertisements, brochures, recipes, instructions, invitations, map legends and directions, and forms or questionnaires with directions for filling them in. Functional writing helps students recognize that writing is a tool that is deeply interwoven with life in our society.
- **Narrative writing,** such as memoir, fantasy, science fiction, mystery, traditional tales, legends or myths, realistic fiction, and historical fiction. Writing narratives may lead students back into literature to study the writer's craft, or, conversely, it may lead to reading and studying informational texts for details about a place or time in order to understand the story better.
**Informational writing**, such as biographies of others and autobiographies of themselves, descriptions, summaries of information, interpretations of data, and reports. Informational writing may require research, experimentation, or scientific investigation. Students may also need to study informational texts to discover ways to organize information and present it clearly.

**Poetic writing**, in which students represent their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in highly structured and patterned language. Here they consider the sound of language and the images evoked by their choice of words; they use the poetic devices such as metaphor, simile, rhyme, and onomatopoeia.

**Shifts Over the Elementary Grades in Writing**

Figure 1–1 is a picture of how writing ability shifts over the course of the elementary grades. The entry-level skills on this chart may well exist in your classroom, and special segments at the end of each section provide specific suggestions for working with these students. Our primary interest, however, centers on grades 3 through 6 (the shaded area on the chart).

The goal of any writing program is to help all students make consistent progress. To that end, it is important that we as teachers:

- Allow time for writing every day.
- Provide minilessons that offer specific instruction on all aspects of writing.
- Confer with students, offering assistance specific to their work.
- Give feedback on writing.
- Help students set goals and assess their own progress.
- Expose students to different genres.
- Support membership in a writing community that accepts an individual's present abilities and communicates high expectations for improvement.

A writer is not created from a few experiences. Almost all professional writers attribute their finely honed skills to hard work over many years. The same is true for our intermediate students. While they may develop basic writing skills in the primary grades, this is only the beginning of their developmental journey as competent writers.

**Broadening Reading Abilities**

The span of learning that takes place during the elementary years is amazing. Typically, children enter kindergarten with rather vague notions of what reading and writing are all about. During the next seven years, they progress from a rudimentary understanding to essentially an adult level of literacy. By the time students leave the sixth grade, they can read just about anything they have the background to understand; the experiences and the meaning they bring to reading are the key to their ongoing development.

**Over Time**

Figure 1–2 displays reading-development characteristics along a continuum. Information on emergent and early readers is included because (1) some students in intermediate classrooms will no doubt be reading at these levels and (2) it’s helpful for any teacher to understand the full continuum of student development. As with writing, we would not expect all students to exhibit grade-level expectations. What’s more, no one reader will exhibit all of the characteristics at any particular level. Certain readers may possess excellent word-solving skills, for example, while their awareness of text organization—in either fiction or nonfiction—is just developing. Other students may read voraciously in one or two genres but either are unwilling or lack the confidence to read more widely.

Providing the learning environment and the teaching that intermediate students need to move along this continuum from transitional to advanced levels is a challenge. The goal is to achieve consistent progress by knowing where to meet them as readers and knowing where to take them next. Students need time, materials, and explicit teaching. Progress to advanced levels will not be possible unless we are serious about providing extended periods of time for reading every day. As teachers we need appropriate books and other reading materials that will offer challenge and support to our developing students.

With content area learning becoming so important in the intermediate grades, it may seem difficult to find the time to teach reading this intently—and even students at self-extending and advanced levels need instruction. Remember that your teaching of reading may be coordinated with work in content areas. After all, students need to read widely, and some of that
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergent Writers</th>
<th>Early Writers</th>
<th>Transitional Writers</th>
<th>Self-Extending Writers</th>
<th>Advanced Writers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✦ Write name left to right.</td>
<td>✦ Write known words fluently.</td>
<td>✦ Spell many words conventionally and make near-accurate attempts at many more.</td>
<td>✦ Spell most words quickly without conscious attention to the process.</td>
<td>✦ Understand the linguistic and social functions of conventional spelling and produce products that are carefully edited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Write alphabet letters with increasingly accurate letter formation.</td>
<td>✦ Write left to right across several lines.</td>
<td>✦ Work on writing over several days to produce longer, more complex texts.</td>
<td>✦ Proofread to locate their own errors, recognize accurate parts of words, and use references or apply principles to correct words.</td>
<td>✦ Write almost all words quickly, and accurately, and fluently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Hear and represent some consonant sounds at beginning and ends of words.</td>
<td>✦ Write 20 to 30 words correctly.</td>
<td>✦ Produce pieces of writing that have dialogue, beginnings, and endings.</td>
<td>✦ Have ways to expand their writing vocabularies.</td>
<td>✦ Use dictionary, thesaurus, computer spell check and other text resources: understand organization plans for these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Use some letter names in the construction of words.</td>
<td>✦ Use letter-sound and visual information to spell words.</td>
<td>✦ Develop ideas to some degree.</td>
<td>✦ Understand ways to organize informational writing such as compare/contrast, description, temporal sequence, cause/effect.</td>
<td>✦ Control a large body of known words that constantly expands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Sometimes use spaces to separate words or attempted words.</td>
<td>✦ Approximate spelling of words, usually with consonant framework and easy-to-hear vowel sounds.</td>
<td>✦ Employ a flexible range of strategies to spell words.</td>
<td>✦ Develop a topic and extend a text over many pages.</td>
<td>✦ Demonstrate a large speaking and listening vocabulary as well as knowledge of vocabulary that is used often in written pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Label drawings.</td>
<td>✦ Form almost all letters accurately.</td>
<td>✦ Consciously work on their own spelling and writing skills.</td>
<td>✦ Develop pieces of writing that have &quot;voice.&quot;</td>
<td>✦ Notice many aspects of the writer's craft in texts that they read and apply their knowledge to their own writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Establish a relationship between print and pictures.</td>
<td>✦ Compose 2 or 3 sentences about a single idea.</td>
<td>✦ Write in a few different genres.</td>
<td>✦ Use what they know from reading texts to develop their writing.</td>
<td>✦ Critically analyze their own writing and that of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Remember message represented with letters or words.</td>
<td>✦ Begin to notice the author's craft and use techniques in their own writing.</td>
<td>✦ Demonstrate ability to think about ideas while &quot;encoding&quot; written language.</td>
<td>✦ Recognize and use many aspects of the writer's craft to improve the quality of their writing.</td>
<td>✦ Write for a variety of functions—narrative, expressive, informative, and poetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Write many words phonetically</td>
<td>✦ Write about familiar topics and ideas.</td>
<td>✦ Use basic punctuation and capitalization skills.</td>
<td>✦ Write for many different purposes.</td>
<td>✦ Write in various persons and tenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Write a few easy words accurately.</td>
<td>✦ Remember messages while spelling words.</td>
<td>✦ Continue to incorporate new understanding about how authors use language to communicate meaning.</td>
<td>✦ Show a growing sense of the audience for their writing.</td>
<td>✦ Write for different audiences, from known to unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Communicate meaning in drawings.</td>
<td>✦ Consistently use spacing.</td>
<td>✦ Critique own writing and offer suggestions to other writers.</td>
<td>✦ Critique own writing and offer suggestions to other writers.</td>
<td>✦ Write about a wide range of topics beyond the present time, known settings, and personal experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texts: Simple labels and sentences with approximated spelling.</td>
<td>✦ Relate drawings and writing to create a meaningful text.</td>
<td>Texts: Longer texts with several ideas; mostly conventional spelling and punctuation; simple sentence structure.</td>
<td>Texts: A variety of genres; conventional use of spelling and punctuation; more complex sentence structure; development of ideas in fiction and nonfiction; use of a variety of ways to organize nonfiction.</td>
<td>Texts: A variety of long and short compositions; wide variety of purpose and genre; literary quality in fiction and poetry; variety of ways to organize informational text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Approximate Grades: K-1 | 1-2 | 2-3 | 3-4 | 4-6 |

Figure 1-1. Building an Effective Writing Process Over Time
## Building an Effective Reading Process Over Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✦ Become aware of print.</td>
<td>✦ Know names of most alphabet letters and many letter-sound relationships.</td>
<td>✦ Read silently most of the time.</td>
<td>✦ Read silently; read fluently when reading aloud.</td>
<td>✦ Read silently; read fluently when reading aloud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Read orally, matching word by word.</td>
<td>✦ Use letter-sound information along with meaning and language to solve words.</td>
<td>✦ Have a large core of known words that are recognized automatically.</td>
<td>✦ Use all sources of information flexibly in a smoothly orchestrated way.</td>
<td>✦ Effectively use their understandings of how words work; employ a wide range of word solving strategies, including analogy to known words; word roots, base words, and affixes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Use meaning and language in simple texts.</td>
<td>✦ Read without pointing.</td>
<td>✦ Use multiple sources of information while reading for meaning.</td>
<td>✦ Sustain reading over texts with many pages, that require reading over several days or weeks.</td>
<td>✦ Acquire new vocabulary through reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Hear sounds in words.</td>
<td>✦ Read orally and begin to read silently.</td>
<td>✦ Integrate sources of information such as letter-sound relationships, meaning, and language structure.</td>
<td>✦ Enjoy illustrations and gain additional meaning from them as they interpret texts.</td>
<td>✦ Use reading as a tool for learning in content areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Recognize name and some letters.</td>
<td>✦ Read fluently with phrasing on easy texts; use the punctuation.</td>
<td>✦ Consistently check to be sure all sources of information fit.</td>
<td>✦ Interpret and use information from a wide variety of visual aids in expository texts.</td>
<td>✦ Constantly develop new strategies and new knowledge of texts as they encounter greater variety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Use information from pictures.</td>
<td>✦ Check to be sure reading makes sense, sounds right, looks right.</td>
<td>✦ Do not rely on illustrations but notice them to gain additional meaning.</td>
<td>✦ Analyze words in flexible ways and make excellent attempts at new multisyllable words.</td>
<td>✦ Develop favorite topics and authors that form the basis of lifelong reading preferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Connect words with names.</td>
<td>✦ Check one source of information against another to solve problems.</td>
<td>✦ Understand, interpret, and use illustrations in informational text.</td>
<td>✦ Have systems for learning more about the reading process as they read so that they build skills simply by encountering many different kinds of texts with a variety of new words.</td>
<td>✦ Actively work to connect texts for greater understanding and finer interpretations of texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Notice and use spaces between words.</td>
<td>✦ Use information from pictures as added information while reading print.</td>
<td>✦ Know how to read differently in some different genres.</td>
<td>✦ Are in a continuous process of building background knowledge and realize that they need to bring their knowledge to their reading.</td>
<td>✦ Consistently go beyond the text to read and form their own interpretations and apply understandings in other areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Read orally.</td>
<td>✦ Know names of some alphabet letters.</td>
<td>✦ Have flexible ways of problem-solving words, including analysis of letter-sound relationships and visual patterns.</td>
<td>✦ Become absorbed in books.</td>
<td>✦ Sustain interest and understanding over long texts and read over extended periods of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Match one spoken word to one printed word while reading 1 or 2 lines of text.</td>
<td>✦ Know some letter-sound relationships.</td>
<td>✦ Read with phrasing and fluency at appropriate levels.</td>
<td>✦ Begin to identify with characters in books and see themselves in the events of the stories.</td>
<td>✦ Notice and comment on aspects of the writer's craft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Use spaces and some visual information to check on reading.</td>
<td>✦ Read left to right.</td>
<td>✦</td>
<td>✦ Connect texts with previous texts read.</td>
<td>✦ Read to explore themselves as well as philosophical and social issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✦ Know names of some alphabet letters.</td>
<td>✦ Recognize a few high frequency words.</td>
<td>✦</td>
<td>✦ Texts: Wide reading of a variety of long and short texts; variety of genre.</td>
<td>✦ Texts: Wide reading of a variety of genre and for a range of purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Texts:** Simple stories with 1–2 lines.

**Texts:** Longer books with high frequency words and supportive illustrations.

**Texts:** Texts with many lines of print; books organized into short chapters; more difficult picture books; wider variety of genre.

**Texts:** Wide reading of a variety of long and short texts; variety of genre.
reading (as well as writing) can and should be on topics that are appropriate for content area study.

Broadening Appreciation for Reading

Teachers often bemoan the fact that their students can read but don’t. Perhaps they are not experiencing the satisfaction reading can bring. As teachers, we need to help students explore the rich ways in which reading can fill their lives. If we reflect on ourselves as readers, we will discover all the reasons that guide our intermediate students’ reading as well.

Carlson (1974) has described the stages, or levels, of appreciation through which avid readers progress (see Figure 1–3). These stages are not discrete periods but represent the full spectrum of satisfaction that emerges as readers deepen their experience:

1. Reading for enjoyment. At this stage young readers “lose themselves” in books. They no longer have to attend to the “skills” of beginning reading and find themselves completely absorbed; they are not conscious of reading as an act but are simply enjoying a story or satisfying their curiosity about the topic they are exploring.

2. Reading for vicarious experiences. Here readers still lose themselves in books, but they want to know how other people feel and live; they want to experience events and places that are distant from their own here and now.

3. Reading to find yourself. Young adolescents, in particular, are grappling with the problems of growing up and experiencing so many sudden changes. They select characters they read about as models and appropriate these characters’ ways of dealing with things.

4. Reading to understand issues. Students’ interests expand as they use literature to understand philosophical and social issues such as poverty, war, racism, and religious differences.

5. Reading for aesthetic appreciation. Mature readers are drawn to literature as works of art. They read for the inherent aesthetic experience, to enjoy the exceptional language and refined nuances of the writer’s craft.

Some intermediate students are still learning to enjoy stories, but most are reading for enjoyment, for vicarious experiences, and to find themselves. Our reading/writing program must offer them the support, teaching, and materials they need to make continuous progress. Satisfaction and enjoyment must be present at every point along the continuum.

An important prerequisite for providing engaging instruction is to find out more about your students as readers and writers, to investigate their reading and writing habits, interests, and attitudes. One way to do this is to ask students to respond to a reading interview in writing (Atwell 2000; Goodman, Watson, Burke 1996) (included in Appendix 46) or to ask them some or all of these survey-type questions in an interview. The written questionnaire is easily administered and provides a great deal of information quickly. The oral interview will provide more and different kinds of data because you can explore their thoughts and opinions.

Another way to get interesting information about reading is described below:

1. Collect samples of different kinds of written materials. For example:

   ■ Novels at different levels of difficulty.
   ■ Magazine articles from several different sources (e.g., Sports Illustrated, TV Guide, Time for Kids, Images, Muse, Cobblestone, Scholastic News, Cicada).
   ■ Textbooks.
   ■ Poems.

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Expanding Appreciation for Reading

![Diagram](image_url)  

Figure 1–3. Expanding Appreciation for Reading
Informational books.
“How-to” guides of any kind.

2. Conduct a one-on-one student interview.
Ask the student what he is reading and how, what, and why he is reading it.
Ask the student to look at the materials on the table and to identify:
the kinds of materials she most likes to read;
the kinds of materials she least likes to read;

Connecting Reading and Writing
Reading and writing are separate but intimately related processes. Mature readers and writers are constantly making connections between reading and writing. Smith (1988, 25) calls this stance “reading like a writer to write like a writer.” He maintains that when writers read, they notice aspects of text that then become possibilities for their own writing. In addition to enjoying a book, writers develop insights into the craft that produced the book. They notice interesting words or ways language is put together to communicate feelings or help the reader form images. When writers write, they remember their reading and use in their own writing what they have noticed about other texts. Readers and writers are always centering their attention on texts.

Beginners in the primary grades are learning what readers and writers do. They are developing those basic skills and strategies that allow them to engage in the acts of reading and writing. We should not forget, however, that while the focus may be on learning to read or write, the goal of the individual reader or writer is always the same—to enjoy, understand, and interpret text. Even young readers and writers are establishing important concepts about how authors and illustrators construct meaning. They learn how authors and illustrators organize ideas and use language. They learn how authors and illustrators use detail to arouse feelings, create characters, or build suspense. They learn that illustrations extend and enhance the meaning of the text and therefore need to be placed near the text to which they relate.

Much of this learning for very young children takes place while the teacher reads aloud to them; nevertheless, if quality literature is used even in the simple texts they read for themselves, there is much to notice about the craft of writing. Eckhoff (1983) found that young children’s writing clearly reflected the features and style of the texts they were reading in the instructional context.

In the intermediate grades, students learn more about the processes of reading and writing and use the skills and strategies of readers and writers in a wide range of learning contexts. If their literacy program has provided the opportunity, these students have acquired a rich background of texts that they can, to a large extent, remember. They draw on these textual resources as writers, beginning to attend to the ways in which different authors and illustrators construct meaning. In turn, their growing awareness enriches their ability to develop and communicate ideas in writing.

Chew (1985) has provided an interesting summary of the parallel processes that exist in reading and writing. He says:

[T]he reader is a mental writer, one who summarizes, gains information, and readjusts. As readers read they adjust the information base from which they operate and change their predictions of what is yet to come. (p. 170)

Figure 1–4 summarizes the important parallels between reading and writing. You will notice the many similarities though there are also important differences.

Reading and writing may be taught as separate subjects, but the connections across these two parallel processes must be made explicit. For example, a mini-lesson on some aspect of text—using language to create images, effective titles—might serve both for reading and writing. Connections between reading and writing are enhanced by the conversation that surrounds reading and writing in the intermediate classroom. When students discuss their writing with the teacher and with one another, they can use the text they have read as resources for just about any aspect of writing—from words to organization. When students talk about the books they are reading, they become aware of texts in ways that make features more accessible to them as writers. The teacher’s presence is the key to creating these complex interrelationships.
## How Reading and Writing Are Alike

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>◆ Before and during writing, writers often talk, discuss, brainstorm, reflect, gather information, make lists, etc.</td>
<td>◆ Before and during reading, readers talk, make predictions, skim outlines or headings, and raise questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Writers bring shape to the written piece as they draft and revise it.</td>
<td>◆ Readers do not change the print but they revise their thoughts, predictions, and concepts as they read.</td>
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<tr>
<td>◆ Writers learn to look at their work, rereading for needed changes.</td>
<td>◆ Readers learn to reevaluate their understandings about a written piece, often reading a text again.</td>
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<tr>
<td>◆ Writers share their work informally through discussion and more formally through publication.</td>
<td>◆ Readers share their understandings with others through verbal, written, or artistic responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Writers appreciate the work of other writers.</td>
<td>◆ Readers appreciate the insights and understandings of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Writers compose whole pieces of text.</td>
<td>◆ Readers draw understandings across whole texts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Writers bring their own meanings to the texts they compose; they express their ideas and feelings in written language.</td>
<td>◆ The meaning that readers derive from texts varies with their experiential background; in other words, they bring meaning to the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>◆ Drafts reveal writers’ attempts to apply their knowledge in new ways.</td>
<td>◆ Partially correct responses reveal readers’ attempts to use information to solve words.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Figure 1–4. How Reading and Writing Are Alike**

### Suggestions for Professional Development

The ultimate goal of the literacy program is to enable students to learn how satisfying reading and writing are and to establish lifelong reading and writing habits. Teachers who themselves engage in reading and writing, and who examine their habits and attitudes as readers and writers, can best help students experience the power of their own literacy.

1. Take a piece of paper and write responses to the questions on the survey “Looking at Yourself as a Reader and a Writer” (Figure 1–5). Bring your responses to a meeting with a group of colleagues. If you can, also bring copies of the books you thought about as you filled in the survey and pieces of writing you are working on or have completed. (You may decide to have two meetings—one on reading and one on writing. If so, save responses from the first session to make connections between the two processes.)

2. Discuss your reading and writing responses. Ask a recorder to write on chart paper all the characteristics of reading and writing brought up by your group. This list will serve as a summary of what mature readers and writers do.

3. Compare your list with the lists at the beginning of this chapter and add ideas if appropriate.

4. Discuss the characteristics of readers and writers that you and your colleagues exhibit in connection with your students:

   - What experiences helped you create your habits and attitudes, likes and dislikes as readers and as writers?
   - How do you see some of the characteristics of readers and writers reflected in the students you teach? (You may want to respond to this question in grade-level pairs.)
   - What classroom experiences support students as they develop mature reading and writing habits, attitudes, and interests?