

# CRN Supported Collaboration – Cultural Historical Theory meets Early Literacy Research

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## Paper

Mackenzie, N.M., & Veresov, N. (2013). How drawing can support writing acquisition: Text construction in early writing from a Vygotskian perspective, *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 38 (4), 22-29

## Abstract

To be truly literate, children need to learn to create, comprehend and use written, visual, aural and multimodal texts. When they start school, they are usually able to create spoken and visual texts (drawings) but have limited skills in written text creation (writing). Our study investigated what would happen if teachers encouraged children, in the first six months of formal schooling, to continue visual text creation while they taught them to create written texts. Ten teachers and 60 children from six schools in a regional centre in Australia informed the study. Genetic Research Methodology (GRM) provided a framework with which to interrogate and understand the data and consequently a 'new' way of exploring the relationship between drawing and early writing development. We argue that encouraging children to draw, while teaching them how to write, allows children to create meaningful texts of a complexity that they may not be able to create using conventional print forms alone. We also argue that the incorporation of drawing into the early writing curriculum is more important than ever given contemporary understandings of literacy.

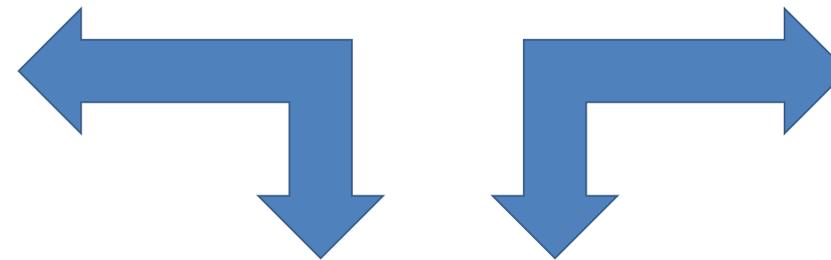
## Conference Symposium

Veresov, N., Mackenzie, N.M. (2014). Cultural-historical genetic research methodology (GRM) in early childhood studies: what it is and how it works, *International Research in Early Childhood Education "Children's Rights to Early Education"*, Santiago, Chile, January

## Abstract

The general model of cultural-historical genetic research methodology (GRM) will be presented. This methodology represents the system of interconnected theoretical and experimental research instruments/tools for refocusing the researcher's lens on development by making visible processes that are ordinarily hidden beneath the surface, namely, changes in child's behaviour. Main principles of genetic research methodology will be described and examined from the point of view of how they reflect main aspects of developmental as a complex process of the qualitative reorganisation of mental functions. This discussion will be followed by an empirical example showing GRM in action.

The study investigated what would happen if teachers encouraged children, in the first six months of formal schooling, to continue visual text creation while teaching them to create written texts. Findings suggest that encouraging children to draw, while teaching them how to write, allows children to create meaningful texts of a complexity that they may not be able to create using conventional print forms alone. We also argue that the incorporation of drawing into the early writing curriculum is more important than ever given contemporary understandings of literacy.

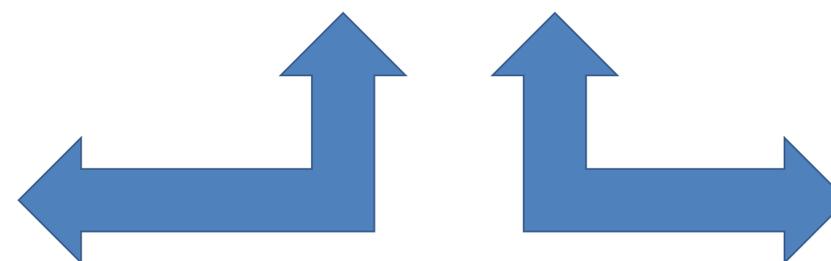


## Collaborative process

- One academic from Monash and one from CSU
- Genetic model of cultural-historical genetic research brought to existing research data provided a new way of examining the data from Mackenzie's *Becoming a Writer* research data
- Initial face to face discussions re methodology, common interests, existing data, questions and overall focus, in face-to-face sessions at CRN meeting at CSU Albury
- Development and presentation (by Mackenzie) of conference paper for AERA (2013) which formed basis for paper for peer reviewed journal
- Collaborative writing, followed by co-author critique and refinement online and by teleconference
- Face-to-face meeting at Monash allowed time to work through final draft of paper and preparation for submission
- Symposium for IRECE conference in Chile (Veresov presented) developed during visit to Monash
- Late in 2013 a visit to Albury by Veresov facilitated the theorising which led to new paper

## Benefits and challenges

- Contribution to depth of content offered by varied perspectives based on differing international experience and theoretical positioning
- Challenge of co-authorship across language and cultural boundaries, as concepts and wording required rich debate and discussion of intended meanings



## Conference paper

Mackenzie, N.M. & Veresov, N (2013). Supporting the emergent writer's transition from sign creation to sign use during the first year of school, *American Education Research Association (AERA)*, San Francisco, USA.

## Abstract

There is no doubt that early success with literacy learning supports ongoing success at school. There is a direct link between being literate and having access to opportunities, which have the power to move people out of poverty. Learning to write is an important part of becoming literate. This paper discusses how early years teachers can effectively support children's transition from sign creation to sign use during the first year of school. Despite the fears of administrators and the teachers themselves, the approach discussed did not slow down children's learning of sign use. Instead, it had a number of positive outcomes related to progress, confidence, complexity and attitude. The study applied genetic research methodology.

## Future directions

### Conference Symposium 2014 – accepted

Veresov, N., Mackenzie, N.M. & Chapman (2014). Principles of cultural-historical research methodology: what is it and how it works? *International Society for Cultural Research and Activity Theory (ISCAR) Congress*, Sydney, July

### New paper in development stage (Veresov & Mackenzie)

**Aims** – to provide new theorisation of early literacies in socio-cultural contexts, specifically the impact of multimodal texts on early childhood educators and young learners.

**Conclusion** – we will argue that traditional understandings of what it means to be literate should be replaced by more contemporary approaches if children are to be welcomed into the world of literacy as it operates in the 21st century. This requires a shift in thinking in terms of what the 'ideal form of literacies' is in the 21st century.

### Early discussions with a third collaborator – Denise Chapman (Monash)

- Co-constructing the third space as a tool for examining learning

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