

Dysthe, O. (1996). The multivoiced classroom: Interactions of writing and classroom discourse. *Written Communication*, 13, 385-425.

Keywords: writing instruction

Summary: Three high school classrooms in Norway and the United States were selected for examination. A naturalistic investigation including classroom observations and field notes was conducted to examine how classroom discourse and writing interact with each other. Audiotapes of class, interviews, lesson plans and writing materials were analyzed in order to describe the ways teachers integrated classroom discourse and writing.

Assumptions:

- A classroom always involves multiple voices, a factor that is crucial to productive dialogue with students of diverse backgrounds.
- If the goal of classroom discussion is to generate new meanings for texts, multiple voices can be effective in reaching that goal.

Results:

*Integration of discourse and writing*

- Two classroom teachers used authentic questions and assignments so that students could connect writing assignments to their personal experiences. The teachers used various strategies such as reformulation and think-questions to help students explore their own thinking. The classroom that lacked writing activities did not provide direct prompting to further student learning.
- Students in the two classrooms where multiple voices were valued validated themselves as thinkers through personal feedback from their teachers and clarified their thoughts with collaborative writing and talking.

*Teachers' roles*

- A teacher in the traditional classroom did not relate writing assignments to classroom activities or subject topics. Writing was an isolated activity in the classroom.
- Two teachers in the other classrooms integrated writing and talking for each

learning sequence. In addition, they tried to engage and use various voices and views which had already existed in the class rather than introducing other perspectives from outside.

Suggestions for Teachers:

- Integrate written texts into oral discourse and subject topics to increase use of multiple voices, which provides more opportunities for learning.
- Use authentic assignments to encourage students to develop their own thinking.
- Provide real-life examples of how interaction of writing and talking facilitates understanding and learning
- Use dialogic teaching strategies when integrating writing into subject matters.

Suggestions for Literacy Leaders:

- Support teachers' planning for and use of integrated writing and discourse in student activities.