‘Better writing in primary education’

Amsterdam, May 10, 2012
Background

- Research & Development project:
  cooperation University of Amsterdam and CED-Groep
- Research: 1 phd & 1 senior researcher; various research assistants
- Educational developers and teacher trainers: 5-10
- Participants: 60-80 teachers
- March 2012 - March 2016
Why? Bridging gap between practice and research

- Dutch writing education is of low quality (Inspectorate 2010):
  - only 10% of the time for language education = writing
  - at 68% of the schools writing pedagogy is unsatisfactory
  - teachers do not adjust their approach to differences between students
  - evaluation of writing education and professionalization in writing are rare

- Teachers indicate
  - writing is difficult to teach (e.g. assessment)

- Ingredients for effective writing lessons are available (educational research: reviews, meta-analyses)
Research purpose

Improving the quality of writing education in grades 4 and 5.

That is, improving:
- lessons
- teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge
- teachers’ designing skills
- students’ learning outcomes
Intervention

- Writing strategy instruction
- Integrating writing into an existing online reading comprehension programme *Nieuwsbegrip* (‘Comprehending the news’)
- Learning to write, and writing to read
- Training/coaching of teachers
Research questions
Do new instruction materials (A) lead to better writing & reading lessons (B) and learner results (C)?
Better writing in primary education

Teacher training (D)

Instructional materials (A)

Does Teacher training (D) lead to an additional effect on the Quality of Lessons (B) and Learner Performances (C)?
Does Teacher training lead to an additional effect on the Quality of Lessons (B) and Learner Performances (C)
Which instructional variables (teacher experiments) in lessons as observed (B) contribute to learner performances (C)?
### Design

- following 60 teachers for two years
- 3 conditions:
  - Co = regular reading programme Nieuwsbegrip
  - E1 = experimental writing-reading programme
  - E2 = E1 + training of teachers
- switching replications design:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$Y_0$</th>
<th>$Y_1$</th>
<th>$Y_2$</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A: n=20</td>
<td>pretest</td>
<td>E₂</td>
<td>E₁</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B: n=20</td>
<td>pretest</td>
<td>E₁</td>
<td>E₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C: n=20</td>
<td>pretest</td>
<td>C₀</td>
<td>E₁</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Output

- Evidence-based writing programme, to be included in Nieuwsbegrip
- Instruments for rating pupil’s writing achievement
- Training programme for teachers
Today: Variables

Instructional materials:

☐ writing to learn/read/comprehend

☐ learning to write
Today: Design principles

- Based on proven interventions
  Meta-analyses, successful approaches

- Selection: strategy instruction
  USA: Steve Graham & Karen Harris, Linda Mason
  Spain: Isabel Marinez (Madrid team), Raquel Fidalgo (Leon group)
  Belgium: Mariet Raedts & Elke van Steendam (Brussels team)
  Cornelia Glaser (Germany)
Today: distill design rules from successful interventions

- Distinguish the crucial learning activities in the interventions presented
- Explain why this learning activity is crucial
Learning activity

Observation:
What is the learning activity that seems to be crucial
Explanation
What is it in LA that LA leads to LR?
Instruction → Learning activity

Explanation
What is it in I that it leads to L?
Instruction → Learning activity → Learning Results/outcome (output)

Explanation:
What is it in I that I leads to L?

Explanation:
What is it in LA that LA leads to LR?
Good luck!
And thank you for participating in this two days experiment!