WORKING MEMORY AND SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS SECONDARY RESEARCH?

What is the relationship between working memory and L2 writing process and outcome?

KEY TERMS

Working memory

Retention of information that can be easily accessible. Such information can be phonological, verbal, and visual-spatial.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS SUMMARISED?

16 studies

WHAT DOES IT FIND?

- Task complexity, proficiency level, and type of feedback can constrain verbal working memory.
- Phonological short-term memory can be a negative predictor of the effects of direct corrective feedback plus revision.
- L2 writers may rely more on visual-spatial working memory than L1 writers in translation.
- Genre and task complexity can moderate the associations between working memory and L2 writing performance.

HOW CAN I USE THE FINDINGS IN MY TEACHING?

- Teachers should decide on the level of task complexity based on learners' levels and abilities.
- Teachers are advised to have a clear objective for writing tasks and provide corrective feedback accordingly.
- Teachers should consider factors affecting students' task completion e.g., whether there should be a word limit or a time limit, and the available materials and resources.

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