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The product process interface in children's written text production

It has been hypothesised that the length of written language bursts represents a measure of the efficiency of the translation process when writing. If this is the case then children's expressive writing performance should be predicted by the length of written language bursts, even after the impact of transcription, working memory and language levels have been accounted for. Written language bursts should also differentiate poor writers from typical writers. Ninety-six English-speaking children between ages 8 and 11 were assessed on a battery of language, writing and associated measures including online measures of written burst length and pauses. Burst length was significantly shorter in the poor writing group and discriminated poor writers from their peers, although sentence level performance was the best discriminator. Burst length was also significantly associated with all writing product measures, transcription skills, and oral sentence skills but not oral vocabulary. Written burst length predicted independent variance in text productivity and accuracy over and above non-verbal ability, working memory, transcription and language skills. However, it added little to text quality. Writing bursts indicate efficient translation processes in children's writing and provide a new measure of evaluating writing interventions.