

Writing Right: Strategies and Technologies for Supporting Written Language Growth in Students with Disabilities

David A. Koppenhaver
Appalachian State University
<http://faculty.rcoe.appstate.edu/koppenhaverd/>

Acting on Assessment Data

Proficient Written Composition

*Composing a message that is clearly
understood by the intended
audience.*

Truth in Presenting: Buyer Beware

- Presentation includes theoretical foundation, research basis, personal experience.
- What works with diverse learners varies widely by day, by health, by engagement, by pencil, by _____.
- All conventional literacy/writing.
- Employ the 6-week rule (Erickson)

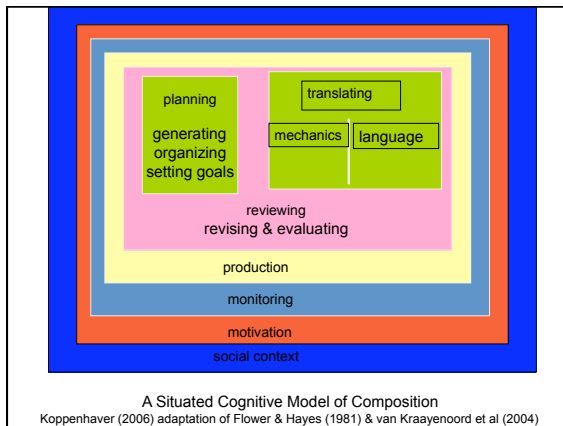
Writing Readiness

- Life
 - No effective prenatal or post mortem writing interventions or assessments were identified in preparation for this presentation
- Pencil
 - a slender tube of wood, metal, plastic, etc., containing a core or strip of graphite, a solid coloring material, or the like, used for writing or drawing.
 - anything shaped or used like a pencil.
- Paper
 - a substance made from wood pulp, rags, straw, or other fibrous material, usually in thin sheets, used to bear writing or printing.
 - a piece, sheet, or leaf of this.
 - something resembling this substance.
- Teacher (optional, but highly preferred)
 - a person who teaches or instructs

Common Beliefs, Attitudes, & Expectations of More Effective Teachers

- Know students are individually different:
 - abilities, interests, backgrounds.
- Assume student potential
 - seek solutions to learning difficulties rather than blaming students.
- Believe learning is social and constructive
 - seek to provide meaningful interactive and collaborative experiences.
- Personalize learning and provide choice
 - increase student ownership and lesson relevance.
- Believe error is important
 - minimize consequences of error and make it safe to take risks.
- Believe modeling is important
 - show struggling learners what is possible.

Adapted from Allington & Johnston (2002). *Reading to Learn*. Guilford Press.



Addressing Social Context and Motivation

Addressing Social Context and Motivation

- Partner and group writing
- DR-TWA (Directed Reading Thinking & Writing Activity)
- Choice
- Writer's workshop format
- Writing without standards*
- Publication

Partner and Group Writing Examples

- Group story
- Q & A poems
- Two voice poems

DR-TWA Example

Yo Yes

Choice

- Topic
 - Gimme 5

Topic, Topic, Topic

- Personal Remnant Books
- Classroom Remnant Lists/Charts
- Pictures (internet, personal pics-slide show)
 - e.g., Tar Heel Reader
- Verbal Choices Related to Student Experience

Writer's Workshop Format

- Mini-lessons
- Drafting
- Sharing
- Conferencing

Address Reviewing

- We do need to encourage and support by:
 - Incorporating writing groups, real audiences (and audience feedback) and author's chair and writing conferences
 - Writing multiple drafts based on peer and teacher response, as well as author self-selection
 - Rewriting first drafts in new voice (*The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*) or for a new audience
 - Engaging in whole class revision of a common text
 - Brainstorming re: audience's needs and understandings.

Feedback Rules

- One positive
 - The best thing about your writing/story/poem is...
- One question
 - One thing I don't understand is...
- One suggestion
 - One way you could make this writing/story/poem even better is...

Addressing Planning

- Topic expertise
- Inspiration
- Drawing
- Experiences

Getting Started

- Planning and Production are 2 greatest barriers
 - Planning
 - Free writing
 - Can't stop writing
 - Gimme 5
 - Drawing or pictures
 - Experiences + frame text
 - Production
 - Alphabet spelling in writing
- Frame texts (color, name, peer, experience, order supports to conventional writing) + teacher-facilitation + dictation

Free Writing

- Take 5 minutes and write about the kids and questions that brought you here.
- Hillocks (.11 effect size)

Planning Examples

- Gimme 5
- Can't stop writing

Experience + Frame Texts

- Who likes eating worms?

Inquiry Approaches = Improved Planning and Translation-Language

- Teachers provide students with problem to (re)solve.
- Teachers designate a writing task for students to engage in to demonstrate their resolution to problem.
- Students work in groups to
 - seek information
 - discuss problem and solution.
- Students write individual papers summarizing, analyzing, synthesizing findings.

Translation-Language

- Sentence combining

Sentence-Combining

- Direct instruction in producing more complex syntactic structures.
- Give students sets of two or more sentences to combine into one.
 - For example:
 - The box is heavy.
 - The box is big.
 - The box is full.
 - = The big, heavy box is full.
 - Cued:
 - The ^, ^ box is ^.
 - The box is ^, ^, and ^.

Writing from Models

Supporting Language (Translation)...
and Planning

Models

(Graham & Perin, 2007)

- Description
 - Involve students in examining examples of one or more specific types of text and attempting to emulate the patterns or forms in these examples in their own writing.
- How they work
 - Form of scaffolding.
 - Require students to repeatedly analyze in order to produce.
 - Develop better understanding of criteria underlying good writing.
 - Increasingly apply knowledge without relying on models for assistance.

Models: Extreme Strategy

- Partner asks, "What do you want to write about today?"
- AAC user responds with a prestored word or message from device.
- Partner writes a two or three-line text about a related topic.
- Partner reads final product and puts it away, and then says, "You write now." or "I can't wait to hear your story."
- AAC user combines letter-by-letter spelling with prestored words and messages to compose.

Using Models to Increase Written Language Quantity and Quality

Writing Repeated Line Texts

This is Just to Say Sample Lesson

Poetry Writing from Models

Directions

- Listen to this sampling of opening paragraphs to letters I have received from friends.
 - Do you think they are sincerely apologizing?
 - Why (not)?

A Poem

- Listen so that you can tell us if you think the author of the following poem is sincerely sorry?
- Why (not)?

This Is Just to Say

by William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold.

A Poem

- Now read the poem to see if you can figure out how it is organized.
 - What does the author say in the first verse?
 - What does the author say in the second verse?
 - What does the author say in the third verse?

Personal Experiences

- What do you remember apologizing for (or having to apologize for) that you weren't really sorry about?
 - Tell the person next to you about that experience.
 - Share some of these conversations with us.

Task

- We're going to use William Carlos Williams's poem structure to write our own this is just to say.
- Step #1: Choose something to apologize for that you're not really sorry about.
- Step #2: Follow the structure of the poem and write your own, "This is Just to Say."

Arithmetic

By Carl Sandburg

Arithmetic is where numbers fly like pigeons in and out of your head.

Arithmetic tells you how many you lose or win if you know how many you had before you lost or won.

Arithmetic is seven eleven all good children go to heaven--or five six bundle of sticks.

Arithmetic is numbers you squeeze from your head to your hand to your pencil to your paper till you get the answer.

Arithmetic is where the answer is right and everything is nice and you can look out of the window and see the blue sky--or the answer is wrong and you have to start all over and try again and see how it comes out this time.

If you take a number and double it and double it again and then double it a few more times, the number gets bigger and bigger and goes higher and higher and only arithmetic can tell you what the number is when you decide to quit doubling.

Arithmetic is where you have to multiply--and you carry the multiplication table in your head and hope you won't lose it.

If you have two small animal crackers, one good and one bad, and you eat one and a striped zebra with streaks all over him eats the other, how many animal crackers will you have if somebody offers you five six seven and you say No no no and you say Nay nay nay and you say Nix nix nix?

If you ask your mother for one fried egg for breakfast and she gives you two fried eggs and you eat both of them, who is better in arithmetic, you or your mother?

Translation - Mechanics

- Works
- Dictation and self-correct to model
- Examples and non-examples
- Self-correction in final drafts of rules taught.
- Teaching a rule to use.
- Writing for real audiences.
- Revision/writing multiple drafts.
- Rubrics
- Doesn't
- DOL
- Grammar exercises
- Worksheets
- Grading/marking errors.

Teaching Approaches	Effect Size
SCAFFOLDING	
Peer assistance	.75
Setting product goals	.70
Word processing	.55
Process approach	.32
Prewriting	.32
Inquiry	.32
Study of models	.25
EXPLICIT	
Self-Regulated Strategy Development	1.14
Strategy instruction	.82
Summarization	.82
Non-SRSD	.62
Sentence-Combining	.50
Grammar	-.32

Graham & Perin (2007)

Some Writing Resources

- *What Really Matters in Writing Instruction: Research-Based Practices Across the Elementary Curriculum* by Patricia Cunningham & James Cunningham (2009). Allyn & Bacon.
- *Best Practices in Writing Instruction* by Steve Graham, Charles MacArthur, & Jill Fitzgerald (2007). Guilford Press.
- *Children with Disabilities: Reading and Writing the Four Blocks Way* by Karen Erickson & David Koppenhaver (2007). Carson-Dellosa.
- *Wishes, Lies, and Dreams* by Kenneth Koch.
- <http://www.writingfix.com/> (Nevada Writing Project)
- <http://mgfx.com/kidlit/> (Web publishing of literature and art by kids.)
- <http://www.kidpub.com/> (Web publishing of kids' writing since 1995).
- Dave Koppenhaver homepage, <http://faculty.rcoe.appstate.edu/koppenhaver/>
- Center for Literacy and Disability Studies, <http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/>