Teaching Writing: A Process Approach

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Presentation Overview

• Reflection
• *What do successful writers do?*
• Requirements for Success in Writing
• *LD and Writing*
• Writing Roles
• Big Ideas
• The Process Approach: What is the Writing Process
• The Four Critical Components for Teaching the Writing Process
• Teaching Together: Writing Process and Strategy Instruction
Metacognitive Reflection

On a piece of paper, briefly describe the process you would go through if I asked you to write an essay on the following topic:

What are your beliefs about how we should teach children to write?
What Do Successful Writers Do?

- Develop goals and adjust them to meet writing demands
- Use cognitive strategies for planning, generating text, and revising their work to meet their goals
- Use knowledge of genres and text structures to effectively organize content
- Self-regulate thoughts, feelings, and actions throughout the writing process
Requirements for Success in Writing

- Verbal skills
- Topics/ideas (something to say)
- Sentence composition
- Organization and connection of ideas
- Fluency in handwriting (or typing)
- Spelling skills
- Application of grammar, punctuation, and capitalization conventions
- Active engagement and sustained effort
- Ability to read
- Ability to analyze and edit
Learning Disabilities and Written Expression

For students with disabilities, there are many ways for the complex process of writing to go wrong.

– Difficulty generating ideas
– Minimize role of planning
– Lack of strategic approach
– Ineffective strategies for revising their writing
– Struggle with spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and handwriting

As cited in Graham, Harris, & Larsen, 2001; Wong, 2000; Troia, 2003
Deficits in Written Expression

Just because many of our students have weak writing skills does not mean they have nothing to say. In oral speech, they often...

- express their ideas very clearly
- use more sophisticated vocabulary
- show greater creativity
Things that go wrong...

– Overemphasize importance of transcription skills like handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization (less aware of what constitutes good writing and the way accomplished writers achieve their writing goals)

– Overestimate their writing abilities
How to solve...

Use a Process Approach. Teach the Writing Process explicitly.
WRITING ROLES: Author vs. Secretary

• We employ two roles when we write.
  – **Author role:**
    • concerned primarily with the content, organization, word choice, etc.
  – **Secretary role:**
    • concerned primarily with the spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar
• Writing instruction should include both!

Kameenui & Carnine (1998)
The Big Ideas

– *Emphasis* on teaching the *writing process*
– *Emphasis* on teaching *text structures* (i.e., various genres of writing)
– *Emphasis* on *collaborative process* (i.e., peer interaction and teacher-student interaction)

– Kameenui & Carnine (1998)
What Is the Process Approach?

- shift away from product-only focus
- shift toward focus on processes of effective writing and learning in an interactive, collaborative environment
- focus on *meaning* of students’ writing
- student involvement in topic and genre selection
- creation of a writing community
- writing is integrated with the rest of the curriculum
Writing Process

Pre-Writing
- Choose topic
- Determine audience, purpose, and text structure
- Brainstorm
- Organize ideas

Drafting
- Write drafts
- Emphasis on content not grammar

Revising
- Share writing with teacher and peers
- Students discuss
- Teacher provides feedback
- Students change substance

Editing
- Proofread own work
- Help proofread peers’ work
- Expected to increasingly identify and correct own errors

Publishing
- Students publish in appropriate form
- Share writing with appropriate audience
Four Critical Components
(of an Effective Writing-Process Approach to Teaching Written Expression)

- Time
- Ownership
- Response
- Instruction
Four Critical Components of an Effective Writing-Process Approach to Teaching Written Expression: **TIME**

- Students need to write often and regularly (at least 4 days per week for 60 minutes).

- Students need opportunities for sustained writing.

- There should be a balance of time spent in secretary role and author role—Do not emphasize one role over the other.

- Students also need **time** to meet with each other and the teacher to discuss their writing.
Four Critical Components of an Effective Writing-Process Approach to Teaching Written Expression: **OWNERSHIP**

Allow students to make decisions about their own work:

- Opportunities to self-select topics
- Emphasis on personal goal setting
- Displays of student work
Four Critical Components of an Effective Writing-Process Approach to Teaching Written Expression: **RESPONSE**

Students should **share** their work on a regular basis

➢ peer revising and editing conferences
➢ teacher-student conferences
➢ author’s chair
➢ writing celebrations

Form a **responsive** writing community!
Four Critical Components of an Effective Writing-Process Approach to Teaching Written Expression: **INSTRUCTION**

When teaching the Writing Process…

**Explicit instruction** in each element of writing occurs **before**, **during**, and **after** completion of writing the **1st draft**.

**Structure the learning environment** so that students can practice using strategies taught while also learning from each other and the teacher in a caring, supportive, and literacy-rich environment.
Four Critical Components of an Effective Writing-Process Approach to Teaching Written Expression: **INSTRUCTION**

When teaching the Writing Process…

Don’t forget the roles of *author* and *secretary*.

Capitalize on *teachable moment*.

Be creative, think outside the box. Writing is fun! Enjoy teaching writing while teaching your students to enjoy writing!
INSTRUCTION ~ BEFORE WRITING

- Directly teach text structures and strategies.
  - Use children’s literature and other pieces of published writing as a model for teaching specific text structures.
  - Select strategies based on genre.
  - Use graphic organizer to teach story structure during reading and pre-writing.
  - Attempt to use the same strategies and graphic organizers for writing as you do reading.
INSTRUCTION ~ BEFORE WRITING (continue)

- Directly teach planning (i.e., Pre-Writing).
- Teach outline use.
  - Use outlines for organizing thoughts and layout during pre-writing.
- Teach sequencing.
  - Tie to introduction (beginning), body (middle), and conclusion (end).
- Teach students how to turn an outline into a piece of writing in paragraph form.
- Teach use of various graphic organizers.
  - Helps to individualize to specific learner needs.
INSTRUCTION ~ BEFORE WRITING (continue)

- Allow topic choice variations.
  - Free choice
  - Teacher choice
  - Surprise
  - Outsider choice (e.g., writing contests topic selection)

- Five-minute Writing
  - After topic selection occurs, students write for 5-minutes on the topic without stopping.

- Tailor pre-writing to the individual writing systems of your students.
  - Let student decide – outline, graphic organizer, or both.

- Teach relevant mnemonic strategies.
INSTRUCTION ~ DURING WRITING

- Directly teach grammar and mechanics of writing.
  - Teach sentence structure, parts of speech, capitalization, and punctuation, through mini-lessons directly tied to the students’ writing.
  - Once taught, then tie to editing.
  - Spend time working with sentences.
  - Teach sentence structure and types.
  - Teach writing topic and concluding sentences.
  - Play with word order within sentences.
  - Teach sentence combining.
  - Teach use of transitions to connect ideas within writing.
INSTRUCTION ~ AFTER WRITING

- **Directly teach revising.**
  - During mini-lessons model and teach, sentence combining, expanding sentences, adding details, etc.
  - Use conferencing – student-student and student-teacher.
  - Teach relevant mnemonic strategies.

- **Directly teach editing.**
  - Teach editing from the beginning.
  - Use conferencing – student-student and student-teacher.
  - Teach students to read draft aloud and listen for potential edits.
  - Develop individualized editing check sheets with known reminders for editing written work (e.g., Make sure the first letter of the first word in the sentence is capitalized.)
  - Teach relevant mnemonic strategies.
INSTRUCTION ~ AFTER WRITING

- Celebrate writing!!
  - Author’s Chair
  - Author Visits
  - Publications
  - Contests
  - Presentations
  - Displays
  - Parties

- Then, teach the concept that all writing can be revising and continuously updated; thus, writing is a process, no piece of writing has to ever be final.
In 5 minutes, write down the first three things about the Writing Process that come to your head and you will walk away with for use in your own classroom while teaching writing.
Teaching Together: Writing Process and Strategy Instruction
Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)

- Model developed by Drs. Karen Harris and Steve Graham
- An approach to teaching writing, NOT a strategy
- Allows teachers to choose the strategy
- Flexible: Can be used to teach any kind of writing
## What Types of Writing Do Our Students Produce?

**Essay Types:**
- Narrative
- Expository
- Expressive
- Descriptive
- Persuasive
- Point-of-View
- Clarification

**Other Writing:**
- Essay Tests
- Business Letters
- Personal Letters
- E-mails
- Poetry
- Texting
- Tweeting
- Facebook posts
3 Overarching Concepts

- Genre of Writing
- Stages of Writing
- Strategies for Writing
What Does the Research Say about SRSD?

- Students, with and without LD, approach writing more strategically.

- Students, with and without LD, write longer, more organized essays.

- Students gain self-efficacy and improve their attitudes about writing.

- Students are often able to transfer their gains to other settings and teachers, but they are less likely
Instructional Stages of SRSD Model

1. Activate and Develop Background Knowledge
2. Discuss It
3. Model It
4. Memorize It
5. Support It
6. Independent Performance
Stages: Activate and Develop Background Knowledge

1. Activate and Develop Background Knowledge
   - discuss the characteristics of good writing
   - explicitly teach text structure for genre to be developed
Stages: Discuss it

2. Discuss It

- introduce the strategy to be taught and discuss its benefits and applications
- gain commitment to learn strategy and expend effort
Stages: Model it

3. Model It

- model strategy steps and self-regulation procedures across varied tasks
- discuss ways that strategy steps may need to be modified for varied tasks, settings, or goals
- collaboratively develop self-statements and self-reinforcement procedures
- Use metascript/think aloud (Model metacognition!)
Stages: Memorize it

4. Memorize It

- have students memorize strategy steps, mnemonics, and self-statements
Stages: Support it

5. Support It

- collaboratively practice using the strategy steps and self-regulation procedures; use procedural facilitators (hints, cue cards, fill-in-the-blank paragraphs, graphic organizers, etc.) to prompt
- collaboratively establish challenging but attainable writing goals
- gradually fade support as students gain competence
- embed in process writing framework
Stages: Independent performance

6. Independent Performance
- fade over self-regulation procedures
A Family of Writing Strategies
(see Writing Strategies Handout for details)

Planning Strategies:
- POW
- W-W-W, What=2, How=2
- C-SPACE
- SPACE LAUNCH
- STOP & DARE
- TREE
- The 3 Writing Steps
- PLAN & WRITE
- STOP & LIST
- DARE to DEFEND

Revising Strategies:
- SCAN
- C-D-O
- COLA
- COPS
- PQP
- REVISE
So, what does it look like?

Teacher—Picks a strategy based on the genre you plan to teach.

I want to teach my students to write short stories. Which strategy should I use?

C ⇒ Characters
S ⇒ Setting
P ⇒ Problem
A ⇒ Actions
C ⇒ Conclusion
E ⇒ Emotions
Evaluating SRSD: Think-Pair-Share

• Does it include the “big ideas”?
  – Writing process?
  – Teaching text structures?
  – Collaboration?
Evaluating SRSD: Think-Pair-Share

• Does it include the four critical components of an effective writing-process approach to teaching written expression?
  – Time?
  – Ownership?
  – Response?
  – Instruction?
The plan...

Based on the information presented and discussions held during this presentation, how do you plan to revise your current writing instruction to embed practices learned today.

- What needs to be in place for my new plan to work?
- What materials do I need to make or purchase?
- What is my timeline for implementation?