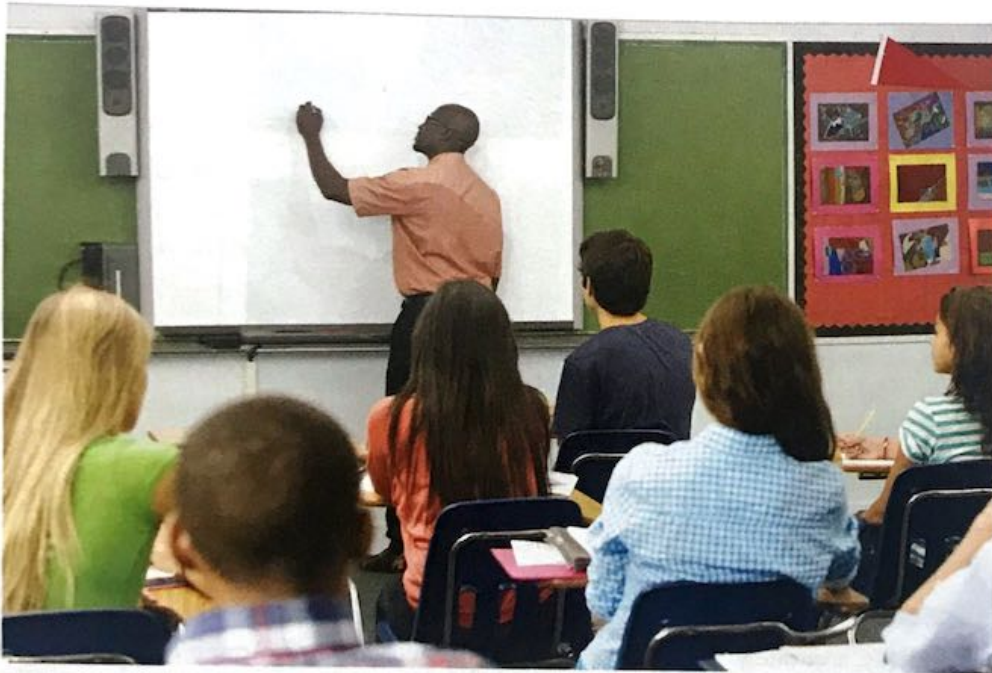


Chapter 9

Assessing and Teaching Writing and Spelling



Mark Bowden/123RF



Learning Outcomes

- 9.1** Identify assessment and instructional practices associated with improved writing outcomes for students with learning and behavior problems.
- 9.2** Describe the critical features of spelling assessment and instruction for students with learning and behavior problems.
- 9.3** Describe the characteristics of students with handwriting problems, and identify the components of effective handwriting and keyboarding programs.

Mike York, a high school teacher of students with learning disabilities (LD), reports, "The adolescents in my program do not want to write. They do not even want to answer questions in writing. Writing a theme for a class is torture." He goes on to describe the students in his class. "The worst thing you can tell them is that you want them to write a long paragraph or theme. I think that for most of these students it

is because they really have very poor handwriting skills. If I provide them with a keyboard to compose, they do better. Furthermore, most of them have little experience writing before they get to secondary school. Many were identified as having learning disabilities in the early elementary grades and then were provided with writing assistance as they went through school. Fortunately, some of the students were provided with instruction in

how to use a keyboard and this helps with their writing production. However, production is not the only problem. Quality of writing is also extremely poor. This poor writing influences their success in content-area classes. For example, several of my students are very interested in science and work hard to understand and participate in the general education classroom. They also know a lot more about science when they can talk about it rather than write about. Unfortunately, almost all assessments in the classroom require students to write their answers. Since my students have writing challenges, they frequently write brief and incomplete answers which give an inaccurate portrait of what they really know. I am now working closely with my students to improve their writing production and quality so that they can be more successful in both general education classrooms as well as the world of work."

Most young children love to scribble. They enjoy writing and drawing on paper, sidewalks, chalkboards, and, unfortunately, even walls. On the first day of school, when first graders are asked whether they know how to write, most of them say yes. What happens to the interest and joy in writing from age 3 to age 13?

Assessing and Teaching the Writing Process

What assessment and instructional practices improve writing outcomes for students with learning and behavior problems? Marynell Schlegel, an elementary resource teacher teaches students with learning and emotional disabilities and supports them in general education classes. Ms. Schlegel observed an increased focus on writing in the general education classrooms, guided by the **Common Core State Standards**. See Figure 9.1 for a list of the key Common Core State Standards in writing. Using the CCSS as a guide, Ms. Schlegel decided to read about writing to better understand how to support her students and help them develop as writers. She determined that her responsibility was two-fold. She needed to help them be successful in the types of writing tasks they encountered in the general education classroom, but she also needed to instruct her students directly in the mechanics and process of writing. She decided to implement a process approach to writing that also provided students with specific strategies for improving their writing (Berninger & Wolf, 2009; Graham & Hebert, 2010; Graham et al., 2018; D. Graves, 1983, 1994). She also chose to use formative assessments in writing to gauge where her students were in the development of writing.

When children spend more time writing, from the early grades through secondary grades, especially while receiving feedback, they feel more capable and are more willing to write (Bulut, 2017; Collins, Lee, Fox, & Madigan, 2017; Pajares & Valiante, 1997). Students' confidence about their writing is higher when they engage in writing consistently. Of course, the mechanics related to writing (e.g., spelling and letter formation) also influence their success as writers.

The good news is that we have made considerable progress in how to effectively teach writing to students with disabilities (Graham & Hebert, 2010; Mason & Graham, 2008; Mason, Harris, & Graham, 2011). When teachers implement effective intervention approaches that use both the conventions of teaching writing (e.g., capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure) and strategies for improving written expression (e.g., planning, composing the results), the results are quite positive.

The chapter presents background and instructional procedures for teaching writing strategies, spelling, handwriting, and keyboarding to students who have learning difficulties and disabilities. How to teach writing within content areas and by addressing the Common Core State Standards for writing is also discussed.

The Writing Process for Students with Learning and Behavior Problems

Ms. Schlegel teaches writing to some of her students in a pull-out setting. Other students on her roster are included in general education classrooms during writing instruction. For the students in inclusion classrooms, she arranged for groups of students with writing difficulties and students with LD to be in the same classrooms so that she could coteach with their general education teachers for three 40-minute periods a week (see Apply the Concept 9.1). During this time, students write and participate in skills groups. Initially, instruction included selecting topics of the student's choice, focusing first on the message and then on the mechanics of writing within each written piece. Skills such as organizing ideas and editing for capitalization, punctuation, and spelling were explicitly taught and linked directly to students' writing. She follows a similar routine with her students in the pull-out writing groups. Ms. Schlegel knew that to implement the writing process approach in her instruction she would need to consider setting, scheduling and preparing materials, teaching skills, and the teacher's role as a writer. Furthermore, in her instruction, she wanted to include many strategic approaches to enhance writing.

Figure 9.1 Common Core State Standards for Writing

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Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

1. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
2. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
3. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

1. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
2. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
3. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

1. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Setting The setting should create a working atmosphere promoting independence but in which students can easily interact. Many students require a quiet area free of interruption to be successful with writing, so teachers should ensure that adequate space is designated for quiet writing. But certain important writing goals require paired writing, reading, giving feedback to others, and writing conferences with the teacher. So adequate space for interacting with others is also needed. Figure 9.2 depicts how Ms. Schlegel

and one classroom teacher arranged the room to create such an atmosphere. Materials and supplies for writing and the students' individual writing folders were stored in specific locations in the room. Students knew where materials could be found, so they did not have to rely on the teacher to get them started at the beginning of the writing period. The room arrangement facilitated conferencing between small groups of students, teacher and student, and student and student.

9.1 Apply the Concept

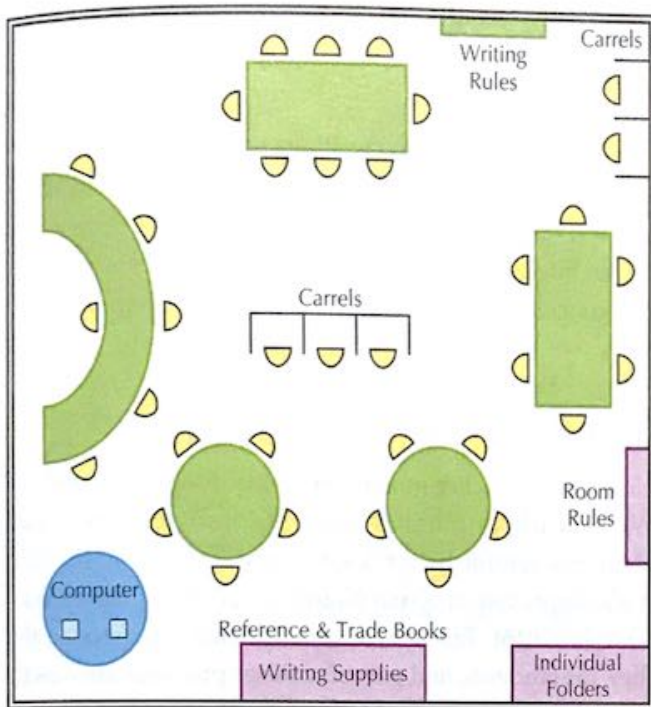
Knowledge of Writing Strategies

Students who have been identified as having a learning disability (LD) differ from other students in their knowledge of strategies related to writing. They are less aware of steps in the writing process (e.g., think of an idea, decide what the purpose will be, organize the key parts sequentially) and of ideas and procedures for organizing their written text. Students with LD are also

more dependent on external cues, such as how much to write, teacher feedback, and mechanical presentation of the paper. They demonstrate significant difficulties in planning, writing, and revising text. Overall, the writing instruction of students with LD improves with well-organized and specific instruction along with ongoing feedback and encouragement to keep writing.

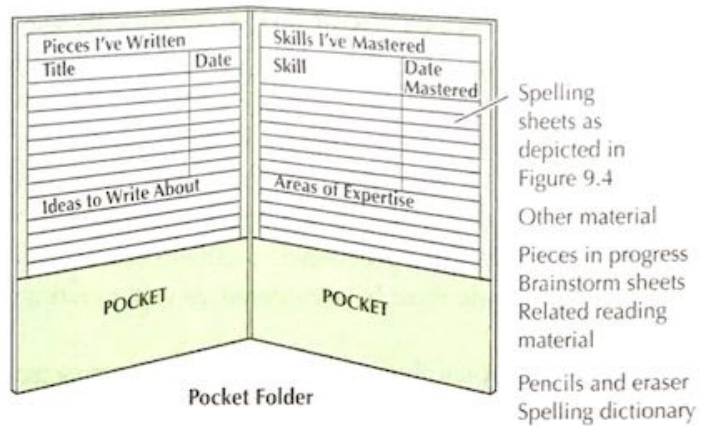
Figure 9.2 Setting the Stage

1. Create a working atmosphere that is similar to a studio.
2. Create an atmosphere in which students can interact easily.
3. Create an atmosphere that encourages independence.



Scheduling and Preparing Materials Ms. Schlegel and the general education teachers set up individual writing folders, illustrated in Figure 9.3, where students keep unfinished writing, a list of possible writing topics, a list of selected writing pieces they had completed, a list of writing skills they had mastered, a list of skills and topics in which they had expertise, and dates when conferences with the teacher were held. Students also kept mnemonic cues to assist them in practicing writing strategies that they were learning. A list of the words an individual student was learning to spell, along with a procedure for learning the words and measuring mastery, was also included in the folder (see Figure 9.4).

Ms. Zaragoza is an elementary teacher who organizes skill lessons, 5 to 20 minutes each day, for small groups of students and individual skill lessons for students who have specific difficulties. She also addresses prevailing writing problems by providing approximately 20 minutes of whole-class instruction specifically teaching a target area (e.g., topic sentence, summary) two to three times per week. When she notices that several students are having difficulty with a particular skill (e.g., quotation marks), or thinks that several students are ready to learn a more advanced writing procedure (e.g., the difference between first and third person when writing), she organizes a skill group. She usually teaches one skill group a day and advertises the skill group by writing the name of it on the board. She writes the names of the students whom she has identified as likely to benefit from the skill group on the board but also allows other students to sign up for the skill group. A skill group would last for 1 day

Figure 9.3 Individual Writing Folder

Figure 9.4 Sample Spelling Form for the Individual Writing Folder

Student: _____

Words I'm Learning to Spell

Date	Word	Written on Card	Practiced Using Strategy	Learned for Test	Learned in Writing	Date Mastered
3/2	1. mystery	✓	✓	✓		
	2. chasing	✓	✓	✓		
	3. haunted	✓	✓	✓		
	4. wouldn't	✓	✓			
	5. elsewhere	✓	✓	✓		
	6. whatever	✓	✓	✓		
	7. their	✓	✓	✓		
	8. there	✓	✓	✓		
	9.					
	10.					

or several, depending on the difficulty of the skill. Ms. Zaragoza also teaches daily skill lessons to individual students. Sometimes these skill lessons are responses to a teachable moment—for example, a student might ask how to develop an ending for a story—and at other times are planned and scheduled. Ms. Zaragoza's viewpoint is that practice in writing is essential to enhancing writing skills, but practice alone is insufficient, and skill groups are an essential way to keep students moving and learning as writers.

Teaching Writing Conventions Students with learning and behavior problems display a wide range of abilities in writing (Berninger, Nielsen, Abbott, Wijsman, & Raskind,

2008; Harris & Graham, 2016; Harris, Lane, et al., 2012; Re, Pedron, & Cornoldi, 2007). They are also very different in terms of the writing skills they need to acquire and the ways in which they respond to instruction. Students who are better able to cope with the demands of schooling are better readers and writers over time, so one of the important tasks is to help students cope effectively with their writing difficulties. In designing effective writing skills programs for students with learning problems, variables such as motivation and attitude must be considered, as well as writing conventions.

Ms. Schlegel taught spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and other writing-related skills during each writing period, and then looked for these skills in students' writing, providing feedback and instructional support when they were not well developed. She also had specific time in which she taught "strategies" to facilitate successful writing, such as planning practices, revision strategies, and opportunities for students to learn to give appropriate feedback to other students. Much of the time was devoted to small-group instruction and individual writing and conferences with classmates and the teacher. Time for sharing ideas and drafts was often scheduled near the end of the period.

Ms. Schlegel conducted short (5- to 15-minute) skill and strategy lessons with individuals or small groups of students. The topics and groupings for these lessons were based on the students' needs. Skill and strategy lessons were decided on the basis of observations of student writing, requests for help, and data collected from reading students' writing. Students were selected to participate in the skill lessons contingent on their abilities and needs. The same topic with different activities was usually covered for four lessons to help provide sufficient practice. She maintained records on each skill area, carefully monitoring students' progress. Ms. Schlegel realized that teaching the elements of writing as well as teaching writing conventions provided her students with the tools they needed to make progress in their writing.

Remember the following critical points about teaching conventions (Fearn & Farnan, 1998):

- Attention to conventions does not disrupt the flow of writing but is part of the discipline of writing.
- Focus on the conventions of writing does not inhibit growth in writing but facilitates it.
- Teach even young children writing conventions. Very young children can learn simple conventions and perform them automatically (see Figure 9.5).
- Reserve about 20% of the instructional time of students with learning and behavior problems for teaching writing conventions.

Perhaps what is most important to remember about teaching writing to students with learning and behavior

problems is that they require adequate time to write—and to receive scaffolded instruction with feedback from the teacher. However, they also require explicit and systematic instruction in the critical elements and skills necessary for effective writing (Furey, Marcotte, Wells, & Hintze, 2017).

Web Resources

For help on teaching writing, see the website of the National Council of Teachers of English: <http://www.ncte.org>. The National Council of Teachers of English also provides lessons for teachers to consider in meeting the Common Core Standards.

Monitoring Student Progress

How does a teacher monitor students' progress in writing? When teachers monitor students' progress on critical elements regularly (at least every 2 weeks), students make improved progress (Gunning, 2010a, b; Hampton & Lembke, 2016). Teachers record students' progress so that they, the students, and parents can see progress, such as the number of words written for younger children and developing a checklist of story elements and their quality for older students. Teachers may use informal ways to monitor progress as well as established curriculum-based measures.

MyLab Education

Video Example 9.1

The teacher in this video monitors her students' writing to help them progress as writers. What methods does she use to assess student writing and plan instruction that supports individual student needs?



Teachers informally monitor students' progress by noting the following:

- Whether students can complete the written project.
- How proficient they are at each element of the writing process (e.g., planning, spelling, handwriting, accuracy of letter formation, composing).
- Whether they can apply the skills and knowledge to other contexts (e.g., during classes other than a writing class).
- How they explain the process they are using.
- Which elements of writing are proceeding as expected (e.g., capital letters) and which require additional instruction (e.g., too many run-on sentences).

See Apply the Concept 9.2 for questions concerning progress monitoring.

Figure 9.5 Instructional Timeline: Awareness to Mastery

SOURCE: L. Fearn & N. Farnan, *Writing Effectively: Helping Children Master the Conventions of Writing* (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1998). Copyright © 1998 by Allyn & Bacon. Reprinted by permission.

Instructional Concept	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
End Punctuation	*	*	*						
Commas in Dates	*	*	*						
Commas in Series	*	*	*	*					
Commas in Addresses	*	*	*	*					
Apostrophes in Contractions		*	*	*	*				
Periods in Abbreviations		*	*	*	*				
Commas in Compound Sentences			*	*	*				
Punctuation in Dialogue			*	*	*	*			
Apostrophes in Possessives			*	*	*	*			
Commas in Complex Sentences				*	*	*			
Quotation Marks and Underlining in Published Titles				*	*	*			
Commas in Series of Adjectives				*	*	*			
Commas to Set Off Appositives				*	*	*	*		
Commas After Introductory Words				*	*	*	*		
Commas After Introductory Phrases				*	*	*	*		
Commas in Compound-Complex Sentences					*	*	*	*	
Commas to Set Off Parenthetical Expressions					*	*	*	*	
Dashes and Parentheses to Set Off Parenthetical Expressions					*	*	*	*	
Colons in Sentences					*	*	*	*	
Semicolons in Sentences					*	*	*	*	
Capital Letters to Begin Sentences	*	*	*						
Capital Letters in Names	*	*	*						
Capitalizing	*	*	*						
Capital Letters in Days and Months	*	*	*	*					
Capital Letters in Place Names	*	*	*	*					
Capital Letters in Person's Title		*	*	*	*				
Capital Letters in Published Titles		*	*	*	*				
Capital Letters to Show Nationality, Ethnicity, and Language		*	*	*	*				
Capital Letters in Trade Names, Commercial Products, and Company Names		*	*	*	*				
Capital Letters in Names of Institutions, Associations, and Events		*	*	*	*				

Monitoring students' progress in writing involves evaluating written products and observing the writing process. Teachers can observe students as they write and use conference times to assess and record their progress. By observing and examining writing processes and products, teachers can plan instruction to meet individual needs. Many teachers keep anecdotal records by creating a record sheet to quickly document students' progress on writing projects. They include a summary of what they observe, the date, and context, and they list skills and writing strategies that need to be taught. Collections of students' written work help teachers, families, and students document growth and development over the school year. Journals and writing folders also provide insight into writing growth. Teachers may periodically review and select representative pieces to show writing development and use progress monitoring to establish writing goals for students.

Curriculum-based measures of writing (CBM-W) have been developed by researchers to provide consistent ways to measure students' writing skills by scoring students' performance on standardized writing prompts. These measures vary in terms of task and grade level. For example, one version that can be used in grades K–8 provides teachers with story starters to use in a timed 3-minute writing session (Hosp, Hosp, & Howell, 2007). Teachers then score the writing sample in one or more ways, including Total Words Written (TWW), number of Words Spelled Correctly (WSC), and Correct Writing Sequences (CWS). The students' scores are compared to a norms table, developed by the researchers. The norms table and scoring instructions can be found at <https://my.vanderbilt.edu/specialeducationinduction/files/2013/07/IA.Writing-CBM.pdf>.

Determining how the teacher will measure writing progress for each student requires consideration. For example, for young students, the teacher may monitor the

9.2 Apply the Concept

Questions to Consider in Monitoring Student Progress

Assessing Progress

How does the student respond during the activity?

- Can the student complete the task?
- How comfortably and proficiently is the task completed?
- Can the student explain the process used to complete the task?
- Can the student apply the skills and knowledge to other contexts?
- Are there aspects of the task that are causing difficulties?

Adjusting Instruction

Will different approaches, materials, or settings improve student progress?

Different approaches

- Simplify tasks into small steps.

- Do more modeling or demonstration.
- Provide more review.
- Give more guidance.

Different materials

- Decrease difficulty of the material.
- Use different types of writing genres.
- Provide checklists or cue card.

Different settings

- Use peers to assist.
- Change time of day of instruction.
- Change location of task.

Sources: T. G. Gunning, *Assessing and Correcting Reading and Writing Difficulties* (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2010); and B. Rosenshine, *Advances in research on instruction*, in J. W. Lloyd, E. J. Kame'enui, & D. Chard (Eds.), *Issues in Educating Students with Disabilities* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1997).

number of words written, number of words spelled correctly, and use of capital letters and punctuation. As students mature in their writing, the teacher may decide to monitor use of adjectives and vivid verbs, facility in editing and revising, and overall quality of the writing. Also, these records of progress monitoring may be kept separately for each type of writing. For example, Mr. Dodge, a middle school teacher, expected students to write an "opinion" piece, a "persuasive" piece, an information report, and a narrative story. He kept separate progress-monitoring forms for each of these genres for each student.

It is important to focus on only one or two items at a time. After students demonstrate progress in the target areas, the teacher can add other elements of writing. This way, progress is recorded, but students are not overwhelmed by the number of writing conventions they need to monitor.

Web Resources

For a helpful website on progress monitoring in writing, see <http://www.progressmonitoring.org>.

Scoring Progress-Monitoring Assessments

Teachers value having time to read, review, and give feedback on students' writing. Teachers also value ongoing progress monitoring as a means of guiding instruction and determining progress. How are these writing samples scored?

MyLab Education

Video Example 9.2

In this video, a teacher uses a rubric to assess students' writing and provide specific feedback. How does progress monitoring help students improve their writing?



Teachers can score students' writing in numerous ways, depending on the information teachers need to guide instruction. Examples include the following:

- You can provide students with a writing prompt and a specified amount of time to write. For younger students, 3 minutes is often adequate. For students in middle and high school, you might want to provide 7 to 10 minutes. After students write to the prompt, you can score in several ways, including writing fluency, meaning the (1) number of words written, and (2) number of words spelled correctly. According to the CBM-W guidelines, the total words written, or TWW, includes a count of words written even if they are spelled incorrectly, including abbreviations, hyphenated words, and characters. In scoring the words spelled correctly (WSC), the score includes all words spelled correctly even if they are used incorrectly. Count as incorrect any proper nouns that are not capitalized and reversed letters (such as "b" for "d"). Watching for these scores to increase over time means the student is improving in writing fluency (Hosp et al., 2007).

- Additionally, the CBM-W guidelines and norms table can be used for scoring CWS, or correct writing sequences. To score CWS, mark with a caret (^) all adjacent words that are correctly spelled; used correctly in context; and have correct punctuation, syntax, and capitalization. Count the total number of carets and compare the score to the norms table listed above.
- The number of thought units, or a count of ideas that are expressed correctly, is another way to monitor progress. This requires the teacher to count the number of error-free thoughts, defined years ago by Hunt (1965) as an independent clause and all its dependent clauses—in other words, a correct sentence.
- Another way to monitor progress is to examine the overall quality of the writing. Writing rubrics are helpful for scoring writing samples. Several rubrics can be designed, based on your instructional goals. For example, view the **writing rubric**.
- You can use an open-ended assessment in which you provide feedback on the target skill, for example, the main idea and a supporting detail.
- You can use a quantitative score such as a number or grade to rate overall quality.
- You can also use the Common Core Standards for the grade you are teaching and develop a checklist to determine whether students are making progress toward standards.

Elements of Writing: Planning, Composing, Revising, Editing, and Publishing

Effective instruction in writing considers preparing students to competently use each of the elements of writing: prewriting or planning, composing, revising, editing, and publishing. When students learn to write, they do not proceed through the process in a linear fashion. In fact, many authors circle back through previous elements and jump ahead to later ones when they are writing their drafts. Also, not all writing leads to publishing. For example, Steven realized after he read his draft to his friend Jacob that he needed to have more information about what submarines look like on the inside. He returned to the prewriting stage and checked out several books on submarines so that he could complete his story. Furthermore, students must learn to master these elements in a variety of writing styles, including reports, letters, notes, and persuasive writing.

In prewriting, students collect information about a topic through observing, remembering, interviewing, and reading, and then make a plan for writing. When composing, students attempt to get ideas on paper in the form of a draft. This process tells students what they know and do not know. During revising, points are explored further,

ideas are elaborated, and further connections are made. When students are satisfied with the content, they edit the piece, reviewing it line by line to determine that each word is necessary. Punctuation, spelling, and other mechanical processes are checked. The final element is publication. If the piece is a good one for the student, it is published. Obviously, not all pieces are published.

Many students with LD experience significant problems in editing and writing final copies because they have difficulty with mechanical skills such as spelling, punctuation, and handwriting. These students often produce well-developed stories that are hard to read because of mechanical errors. Other students with LD have difficulty organizing their first drafts and need to rethink sequencing and order during their revisions.

Graham, Harris, and their colleagues (Graham & Harris, 2005; Harris et al., 2012; Lane et al., 2008) have successfully taught students with LD and behavior disorders to use self-regulated strategy development when writing:

1. Think: Who will read this, and why am I writing it?
2. Plan what to say using TREE:
 - T: Topic sentence
 - R: Reasons
 - E: Examine reasons
 - E: Ending
3. Write and say more.

Prewriting and Planning Many students find the first hurdle of getting started with writing the most difficult. For many students, whether elementary or secondary, it helps to put a topic at the top of the page. This at least keeps them focused on what they are writing. Younger students can write about what they know and have experienced. For older students, topic choice may be within parameters established by the teacher. For example, they may need to write an information report on a country in the world, but they can pick the country and they can pick the topic. This leaves a lot of room for choice, and for some students with LD, a lot of room for indecision. One of the most important roles the teacher can play is to facilitate decision making about topic selection and sticking with the topic.

MyLab Education Video Example 9.3

In this video, the teacher describes how she prepares her students to begin the writing process. What methods does she use to ensure that her students have a clear understanding of the requirements for the task? What prewriting strategies does she use?



For younger students, keeping a list of topics so that they are ready to write is a good idea. Students can also share their topics with the class to spark more ideas for others. Teachers can ask for volunteer students to read their topic lists to the entire group. Now ask the students to expand their ideas for writing and to keep their topic lists in their writing folders. Also tell the students that if they think of new topics they want to write about, they may add them to their lists. Finally, ask the students to select a topic and begin writing. Throughout the school, make opportunities for students to identify additional topics for writing. After they become more comfortable writing and more expert in their use of writing conventions, you can work with students to identify, select, and write about an increasing range of genres, including information pieces, reports, persuasive writing, and poetry.

Problems in Topic Selection Whether teachers provide guidance about the writing topic or leave the topic open ended, narrowing down the focus of the topic is challenging for many students. Teachers can also facilitate topic selection by presenting a range of writing styles, including stories, factual descriptions, mysteries, persuasive writing, writing that involves comparing and contrasting, reporting on topics, and observing. Students often begin writing by telling personal experiences. Through the writing of other authors, students can be introduced to a wide range of categories that can provide exposure to other genres. Figure 9.6 presents a

Figure 9.6 Focusing on a Topic

- Check your folder and reread your idea list.
- Ask a friend to help you brainstorm ideas.
- Listen to others' ideas.
- Write about what you know: your experiences.
- Write a make-believe story.
- Write about a special interest or hobby.
- Write about how to do something.
- Think about how you got your last idea.

list of suggestions for students when they are stuck about a topic for writing. One of those suggestions, asking a friend to help, is discussed in Apply the Concept 9.3.

Topic selection is difficult for students of all ages. For older students, topic selection is typically broadly defined by the question or assignment posed by the teacher. But students still have to focus and refine the topic for their writing. In addition to difficulty in thinking of a topic, immature writers often repeat the same topic. Teachers review students' work and determine whether the stories are changing through vocabulary development, concept development,

9.3 Apply the Concept

A Friend Helps with Topic Selection

Ruth Ann returned with a piece of blank paper, which she handed to Cary. Cary wrote Ruth Ann's name on the paper and underlined it. Then she conducted a rather sophisticated interview.

"Think of three ideas. Want to write about your first day of school?"

"I can't remember. That was 5 years ago," answered Ruth Ann.

"How about the first day in the learning lab?" continued Cary.

"I don't remember that either. It was over a year ago."

Looking at her idea sheet, Cary commented, "I'm writing about a talking dishwasher. Do you want to write about that?"

"Not really," replied Ruth Ann.

"Where do you go on vacations?" asked Cary.

"To Iowa, but I've already written about that."

"Well, have you ever been to a circus?" Cary pursued.

"No."

"How about a zoo?"

"The Los Angeles Zoo," Ruth Ann answered.

"Do you want to write about that?" asked Cary.

"Yeah," remarked Ruth Ann, "that's a good idea."

Cary wrote the number 1 on the paper she had labeled with Ruth Ann's name, and wrote, "las angels zoo" beside it. She remarked, "I don't know how to spell Los Angeles."

"Don't worry," Ruth Ann commented. "I can find that out when I start writing about it."

"OK, let's think up another idea. Have you ever ridden a horse?" asked Cary as she continued the interview.

"No," replied Ruth Ann.

"Do you have any pets?" asked Cary.

"Yeah, I have a cat named Pierre."

"Do you want to write about him?" continued Cary.

"Yes, I could do that," replied Ruth Ann enthusiastically.

Cary wrote the number 2 on the paper and beside it wrote, "writing about your cat."

The conversation continued, with Cary explaining that it is helpful to think up three ideas so that you have some choice when you decide what to write about. After more questioning, Ruth Ann decided that it would be okay to write about a talking shoe, so Cary wrote down Ruth Ann's third idea. Then Cary helped Ruth Ann decide that she was first going to write about her cat. Cary wrote this idea at the bottom of the page and starred it to note that Ruth Ann had selected this topic. Cary ended the interview by saying, "Put this paper in your writing folder so that the next time you have to select a topic, we'll already have two ideas thought up."

story development, or character development. It could be that the student is learning a great deal about writing even though the story content is changing very little. The teacher can provide specific examples of other genres and instructional procedures for how to write in these genres.

Prewriting Strategies Many students with learning and behavior problems begin writing without much planning about what they are going to write. They find that when they read their drafts aloud, others have difficulty understanding the story or following the sequence. Students with LD often have limited text organization skills because they have difficulty categorizing ideas related to a specific topic, providing advanced organizers for the topic, and relating and extending ideas about the topic. Consequently, we need to teach students prewriting skills so that the writing and rewriting stages will be easier. Prewriting instruction helps students with learning and behavior problems produce better writing (Gillespie & Graham, 2014; Sundeen, 2012).

In teaching the organization that goes into writing a piece, teachers can model their thinking as they move from topic selection to writing a first draft. Some teachers find it helpful to teach this thinking process by writing their ideas in an organized structure and by asking students to set goals, brainstorm ideas, and sequence their ideas while they are writing (Troia & Graham, 2002). Some teachers use graphic organizers across curriculum areas to organize writing for both narrative and expository texts. Color-coding graphic organizers provides further support for students who experience difficulty with the planning stage, for example, using different colors for the topic, details, and conclusion ideas (Ewoldt & Morgan, 2017).

Planning Strategies Graham and colleagues (Graham et al., 2012) have developed and tested several approaches to improving the writing of students with writing difficulties through applying self-regulated strategy development. Teachers use self-regulated strategy development with students to guide their acquisition and use of learning strategies. This approach has six steps:

1. *Develop background knowledge.* This refers to understanding when and why the strategy might be used.
2. *Discuss the strategy.* This involves explaining the strategy and how it can be beneficial.
3. *Model.* The teacher models the use and application of the strategy.
4. *Memorize.* The student works to remember the key word and the steps that go with the strategy.
5. *Support use of the strategy.* The teacher supports the student's use of the strategy, keying the student into when to use it and providing feedback.
6. *Independent practice.* Students are expected to use the writing strategy on appropriate tasks and with proficiency.

So what's an example of a "planning" strategy for writing that has been effectively used with students who have learning disabilities? Several of these strategies can be summarized in various references (Harris, Graham, Mason, & Friedlander, 2008; Mason et al., 2011; Mason & Graham, 2008) and are briefly reviewed here:

POW

1. **P—Pick my ideas.** Students consider what they are going to write about, identify a topic, and then either brainstorm (younger students) or use resources (older students) to gather information.
2. **O—Organize my notes.** After identifying the key ideas you want to include in your written product, organize them in the desired order and consider details to include.
3. **W—Write and say more.** Using your organized ideas as a guide, begin writing. After you finish the draft, reread, and write additional sentences and expansions.

For older students (middle and high schoolers) who are required to complete more complex writing tasks, consider adding the following two strategies: PLAN and WRITE (Harris et al., 2008; Mason et al., 2011):

PLAN

1. **P—Pay attention to the prompt.**
2. **L—List main ideas to develop your essay.**
3. **A—Add supporting details.**
4. **N—Number major points.**

WRITE

1. **W—Work from your plan to develop a thesis statement.**
2. **R—Remember your goals.** As you write and reread your writing, be sure that your big ideas and supporting details relate directly to your goals.
3. **I—Include transition words for each paragraph.** Key transition words help the reader understand what you are writing. Examples include *particularly, notably, similarly, equally, besides, such as, for example, indeed, also, further, moreover, and actually.*
4. **T—Try to use different kinds of sentences.** Consider whether you are using comparing and contrasting sentences, sentences that are longer and shorter, and sentences that link and explain.
5. **E—Exciting words.** Writing is more interesting and engaging when you add exciting words such as more compelling verbs, adverbs, and key concept words that relate to your focus.

Several videos demonstrate aspects of prewriting and planning. You can go to **YouTube** and find the Writing Strategies Sample Clip; also consider finding Pre-writing Strategies as well as The Writing Process: Prewriting Strategies.

Graphic organizers that are used to assist in writing are referred to as *brainstorm sheets* or *structured organizers*, *semantic maps*, and *story frames* or *maps*. Although these visual organization devices have been used as aids to reading comprehension, they also serve to facilitate the writing process (Ewoldt & Morgan, 2017; MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2008; Mason et al., 2011). Ms. Turk, a resource teacher who works with Ms. Schlegel, used a think-aloud technique to model how to use the brainstorm sheet presented in Apply the Concept 9.4. She drew a large brainstorm sheet on the board and then introduced the brainstorming technique to the students.

Ms. Turk began, "I want to write a story about a time when I was really scared. So, I decided to write about the time when I was about 10 years old and my dad and I went for a horseback ride. He got hurt, and I wasn't sure we'd get back to the car. There is so much to remember about this story that I am going to jot down a few ideas so that when I begin to write my story, I can remember them all and put them in order. To help me organize my ideas, I'm going to use a brainstorm sheet."

At this point, Ms. Turk explained the brainstorm sheet and the parts of a story. Through class discussion, the students identified a story they had written recently and each part in their story.

Ms. Turk continued modeling, using the brainstorm sheet. "I am going to call my story 'Horseback Ride' for now. I may want to change the name later, since it's easier for me to think of a title after I write the story. Well, it happened when we were on a trip to Mount Graham. So I'm going to write 'Mt. Graham' by 'Where.' I'm not sure how to spell Mt. Graham, but it doesn't matter that I spell it correctly now. I can find out later. Also, since the brainstorm sheet is for me, I don't have to write sentences—just ideas that will help me remember when I'm writing my first draft of the story." Ms. Turk continued to think aloud as she completed the sheet.

9.4 Apply the Concept

Sample Brainstorm Sheet

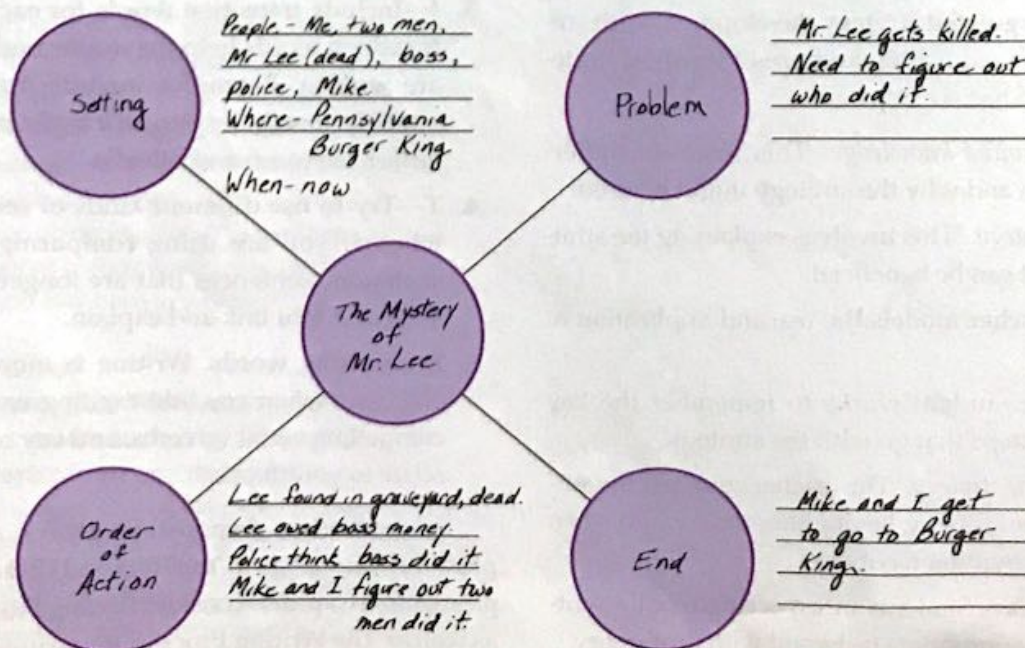
Name:	Ms. Turk
Date:	2/7
Working Title:	Horseback Ride
Setting:	
Where:	Mt. Graham start at trash dump
When:	When I was 10 years old
Who:	Dad and I, also mom and brother Dad and I were riding on trail. Trail got bad.
Action:	Dad's horse stumbled on rock. Dad fell off + hurt his arm. Finally he got on horse. I helped. Rode to top of mt. Mom met us. So did brother. Went to hospital.
Ending:	Dad was OK.

Ms. Turk demonstrated that the students did not have to fill in the brainstorm sheet in a linear fashion. Sometimes it is easier to fill out the ending first. She also demonstrated how, after she listed all the ideas under the action section, she could go back and number them in the order that made the most sense.

In subsequent lessons, Ms. Turk demonstrated how to write a story from the brainstorm sheet. She also worked individually with students to complete brainstorm sheets and to use them in their writing.

During the year, Ms. Turk used several different brainstorm sheets with her students in her classroom. Figure 9.7 shows a brainstorm sheet that was developed for expository writing (writing that describes the facts or information

Figure 9.7 Brainstorm Sheet

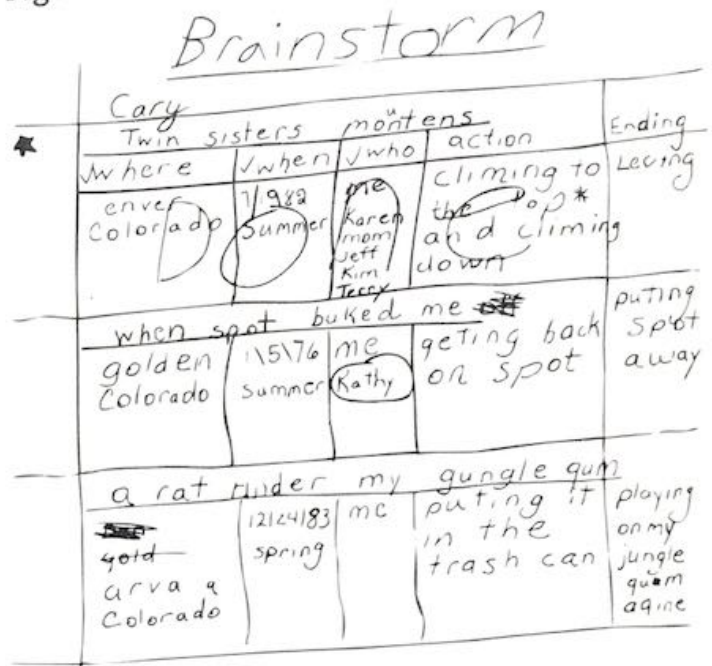


about a subject area; often associated with social studies and science). However, the students also used this brainstorm sheet for stories. They wrote the title in the center circle, and information related to the setting, problem, action, and ending in the four other circles and their accompanying lines. Students also developed their own brainstorming sheets. For example, Cary combined topic selection and brainstorming, and developed the brainstorm sheet in Figure 9.8. Graphic organizers can assist students in organizing the key ideas in their writing, remembering the steps in completing a well-written piece, and remembering writing strategies that they need to use.

Teaching students to think about what they are going to say before they write is generally a helpful technique. However, completing a visual representation before writing may not facilitate writing for all students (see Apply the Concept 9.5).

Composing Many students with learning and behavior problems begin the writing process here. They think of a topic and, without much planning, begin to write. If the teacher provides a prompt or question requiring a written response, they spend little time planning their response or jotting down key ideas. Instead, they write as little as possible. This is probably why secondary teachers value having time to respond to their students' writing but often are frustrated with the minimal impact of their feedback on students' progress. Instead, many students with writing difficulties write ideas as they think of them, and each idea they write serves as a stimulus for the next idea. Therefore, effective writing instruction considers providing specific feedback about each element of writing (e.g., composing) and gives students clear strategies for how to successfully compose sentences, paragraphs, and longer essays (Graham et al., 2012).

Figure 9.8 Cary's Brainstorm Sheet



Some authors suggest using cue cards to assist students in writing better developed stories or essays (De La Paz, 1999). A cue card used by Montague and Leavell (1994) asks students to consider the following elements when composing: where and when, characters (have them think and feel just like real people), problem and plan, and story ending. Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, and Stevens (1991) developed think sheets to assist students in first planning and then organizing their ideas before writing. Figure 9.9 presents the plan think sheet, and Figure 9.10 presents the organization think sheet for the text structure associated with explanations.

9.5 Apply the Concept

The Big Picture

A common problem with poor writers is that the surface structure of their writing—the spelling, grammar, and punctuation—prevents them from expressing their ideas in writing and also keeps others from reading them. Many students with learning problems do not focus on thinking about their story. Their stories are often poorly organized, and their ideas are disconnected and/or missing. These same students can tell you about the story but have a hard time getting all of the ideas about the story in writing.

Following is the description of a procedure developed by Kucer (1986) to help poor writers focus on the "big picture" of writing:

1. Give students notecards, and allow them to write possible topics on the cards (one topic per card). Students then share ideas about topics and make additions on their topic cards.

2. Students select a topic they want to write about.
3. Major ideas related to the writing topic are written on notecards. The major ideas may come from the student's knowledge and experience or, if the writing is in a content area, the student may need to seek the assistance of class notes, books, and magazines. Major ideas are written as key concepts or thoughts rather than as complete sentences.
4. Students share their major ideas about the topics with each other. They make any additions or comments about the ideas they feel will be helpful in writing about the topics.
5. After selecting major ideas, students organize them in a meaningful sequence.
6. With their cards as a guide, students write their pieces.

Figure 9.9 Plan Think Sheet

SOURCE: C. S. Englert, T. E. Raphael, & L. M. Anderson, *Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing Project* (East Lansing, MI: Institute for Research on Teaching, 1989). Reprinted by permission.

PLAN

Name _____ Date _____

TOPIC: _____

WHO: Who am I writing for?

WHY: Why am I writing this?

WHAT: What do I know? (Brainstorm)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

HOW: How can I group my ideas?

How will I organize my ideas?

<input type="checkbox"/> Compare/Contrast	<input type="checkbox"/> Problem/Solution
<input type="checkbox"/> Explanation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Web Resources

For a helpful website on instructional practices in writing for students with LD, see **Reading Rockets**.

One of the skills that students must acquire is how to write sentences that are effective and then to organize these effective sentences into meaningful paragraphs. In particular, students with learning problems require instruction in how to

- Add vivid words and lively verbs.
- Combine short and choppy sentences to make more productive sentences.
- Reduce long and run-on sentences.
- Read and revise to add meaning.

Figure 9.10 Organization Think Sheet for Text Structure Associated with Explanations

SOURCE: C. S. Englert, T. E. Raphael, & L. M. Anderson, *Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing Project* (East Lansing, MI: Institute for Research on Teaching, 1989). Reprinted by permission.

Explanation Organization Form

What is being explained? _____

Materials/things you need? _____

Setting? _____

What are the steps?

- First, _____
- Next, _____
- Third, _____
- Then, _____
- Last, _____

These skills can be taught and practiced separately and then monitored and supported when students write texts. Instructional principles and examples include:

- Teach students to paint a picture with words by using adjectives and adverbs to show readers what they mean. For example, rather than "I ate lunch," the student can write, "I ate my lunch quickly, shoving large bites into my mouth."
- Teach students to avoid using common verbs such as *was*, *were*, and *said* and instead use more interesting verbs such as *avoided*, *clamored*, *quipped*, *barked*, *existed*, and *repeated*. In fact, teachers can make lists of words to substitute for more common words and post the lists in the room as a resource. Students can expand the lists themselves by adding more interesting words.
- Teach students to list ideas and then to sequence them (Troia & Graham, 2002).

The Institute for Education Sciences (IES) provides a practice guide for writing instruction with recommendations summarized in Figure 9.11 (Graham et al., 2012).

Revising Revising is a difficult task for all authors and especially for students with learning problems. Getting the entire message down on paper the first time is difficult enough; making changes so the piece is at its best and can be understood by others is a most formidable task. Many authors need to go back to prewriting and obtain more information, or they spend time conferring with others to find out what parts of their sentences or ideas require additional work. It is also at this stage that some authors abandon the piece. They believe it can never be really good, and so they start again with a new idea.

Many students with learning and behavior problems have difficulty revising and would like to move straight to publication, with little or no revision. When prompted

to revise, many struggling writers make changes that do not really improve the quality of their writing (De La Paz, Swanson, & Graham, 1998; Graham, 1997). Additionally, students often have difficulty monitoring their own revising (Midgette, Haria, & MacArthur, 2008).

One simple strategy for helping struggling writers to revise is the FIX strategy (De La Paz & Sherman, 2013; Sherman & De La Paz, 2015). Teachers can use a red-yellow-green stoplight color coding to help students remember to first stop, then use caution, and then go ahead as they implement the FIX strategy: Focus, Identify and eXecute:

Step One: **Focus** on the essay elements (RED).

- Students must stop and focus on the kind of essay they are writing and what it requires.

Step Two: **Identify** problems (YELLOW).

- Students must use caution to consider whether their writing is what they intended.

Figure 9.11 Recommendations from Research on Teaching Writing: IES Practice Guide

SOURCE: Reprinted with permission from [or Adapted from] Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N. (2012). *Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers: A Practice Guide* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/17>.

Recommendation 1

Provide daily time for students to write.

Recommendation 2

Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes.

Recommendation 2a

Teach students the writing process.

1. Teach students strategies for the various components of the writing process.
2. Gradually release writing responsibility.
3. Guide students to select and use appropriate writing strategies.
4. Encourage students to be flexible in their use of the components of the writing process.

Recommendation 2b

Teach students to write for a variety of purposes.

1. Help students understand the different purposes of writing.
2. Expand students' concept of audience.
3. Teach students to emulate the features of good writing.
4. Teach students techniques for writing effectively for different purposes.

Recommendation 3

Teach students to become fluent with handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing, and word processing.

1. Teach very young writers how to hold a pencil correctly and form letters fluently and efficiently.
2. Teach students to spell words correctly.
3. Teach students to construct sentences for fluency, meaning, and style.
4. Teach students to type fluently and to use a word processor to compose.

Recommendation 4

Create an engaged community of writers.

1. Teachers should participate as members of the community by writing and sharing their writing.
2. Give students writing choices.
3. Encourage students to collaborate as writers.
4. Provide students with opportunities to give and receive feedback throughout the writing process.
5. Publish students' writing, and extend the community beyond the classroom.

Step Three: **eXecute** changes (GREEN).

- Once students have identified the needed changes, they can go ahead and revise.

Ms. Takamura finds that students will revise their pieces if teachers show them how through the work of other students or the work of professional authors. Students with LD, particularly adolescents, can learn procedures such as diagnosing, comparing, and operating to assist themselves during the revision process (De La Paz et al., 1998). When teachers model, demonstrate, and provide feedback using the Compare and Diagnose procedure, students' revisions and writing improve:

Compare and Diagnose: Read your writing and consider the following:

- It ignores the obvious point against my idea.
- There are too few ideas.
- Part of the essay doesn't belong with the rest.
- Part of the essay is not in the right order.

Tactical Operations: The listed problems can be fixed by doing the following:

- Rewrite
- Delete
- Add
- Move

Compare: Reread the paper, and highlight problems.

Diagnose and Operate: Read your writing, and determine whether any of the following apply:

- This doesn't sound right.
- This isn't what I intended to say.
- This is an incomplete idea.
- This part is not clear.
- The problem is _____.

Teachers can show students how to use a "box and explode" strategy as a means for selecting the one sentence in their writing that is the most important but may not be adequately expanded (Block, 1997; Gersten & Baker, 2001; Strickland, Ganske, & Monroe, 2002). Students learn to put this sentence in a box and then to use it as a focus for extending the idea and clarifying story events. Students are taught to "explode" the main idea in the box. For example, suppose a student wrote the following paragraph:

Julia went to her aunt's house on Sunday. After she got there she saw that her aunt's door was open. She walked in the house and saw her uncle on the floor. She didn't know what to do.

Students would be taught to put a box around the sentence "She walked in the house and saw her uncle on the floor." Then they would work to "explode" that sentence so that the reader would learn more about what happened.

For older students, it is often helpful to occasionally use collaborative writing and revision. This provides students with learning disabilities with a peer to facilitate the process and encourage revising (J. J. Lo, Wang, & Yeh, 2009).

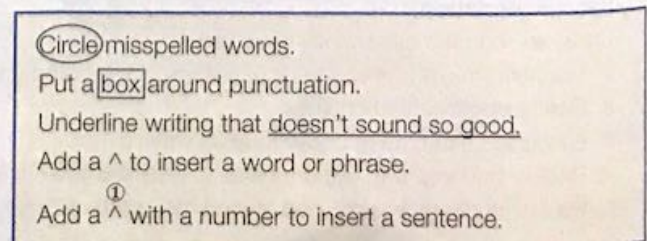
Editing In addition to editing their own work, students serve as editors for the work of their peers. Whereas revision focuses mainly on content, editing concentrates mainly on mechanics. After the student and teacher are happy with the content, it is time to make corrections for spelling, capitalizing, punctuation, and language. Students are expected to circle words they are unsure how to spell, put boxes in places where they are unsure of the punctuation, and underline the sentences about which they feel the language may not be correct. Figure 9.12 provides a poster that can be used in a classroom to remind students of the editing rules. Apply the Concept 9.6 provides guidelines for how teachers and peers might respond to writing.

Although many spelling, punctuation, and language modifications are made during writing and revising, when students edit, they focus solely on mechanical errors. Often, they need to read the text for each type of error. First, they read the text looking for spelling difficulties; next, they read the text looking for punctuation and capitalization difficulties; and finally, they read the text looking for language problems such as noun-verb agreement. Young students may not know what noun-verb agreement is, so they should simply look for sentences that do not "sound right" when they read them aloud.

Publishing What does it mean to have a piece published? A piece is prepared in some way that it can be read and shared by others. For younger students, this may be in the form of books that have cardboard binding decorated with contact paper, scraps of wallpaper, or clip art. Sometimes these books include a picture of the author, a description of the author, and a list of books published by the author.

Older students who spend more time composing and revising are more likely to "publish" or "publicly share" work that is the result of many weeks of effort and several revisions. Why publish? Publishing is a way of confirming a student's hard work and sharing the piece with others. Writing requires an audience, and periodically we need to share what we write. It is important for all

Figure 9.12 Editing Rules



9.6 Apply the Concept

Ways for Teachers and Peers to Respond to Writing

Suggestions to Compliment Writing

- I like the way your paper began because . . .
- I like the part where . . .
- I like the way you explained . . .
- I like the order you used in your paper because . . .
- I like the details you used to describe . . .
- I like the way you used dialogue to make your story sound real.
- I like the words you used in your writing, such as . . .
- I like the facts you used, like . . .
- I like the way the paper ended because . . .
- I like the mood of your writing because it made me feel . . .

Questions and Suggestions to Improve Writing

- I got confused in the part about . . .
- Could you add an example to the part about . . . ?
- Could you add more to this ____ part because . . . ?

- Do you think your order would make more sense if you . . . ?
- Do you think you could leave this part out, because . . . ?
- Could you use a different word for ____, because . . . ?
- Is this ____ paragraph on one topic?
- Could you write a beginning sentence to grab your readers?

The following suggestions are designed to assist students in removing the mechanical errors from their writing (Isaacson & Gleason, 1997):

- Have students dictate their story to improve the flow of their writing.
- Provide students with a list of key words and words that are hard to spell to assist with writing and editing.
- Teach students to use a word book.
- Promote peer collaboration in editing.
- Teach students to use technology to support editing and writing.
- Hold students accountable for using the rules of writing they know, such as punctuation, spelling, and other writing conventions they have been taught.

students to publish—not just the best authors. Publishing is a way of involving others in the school and home with the students' writing.

Web Resources

For additional information on writing and spelling practices for teachers and parents, see <http://k12reader.com>.

The Writing Conference Conferencing is the heart of the writing process. Experienced writing teachers acknowledge that although conferencing with students about their writing is time consuming, there is simply no better way to be sure that you understand what they are trying to accomplish in their writing and can give the type of feedback to help them with corrections.

Successful writing conferences begin with questions from the teacher. Students also know that they will be asked challenging questions about their work. Questions are not asked in a rapid-fire sequence with little time for the student to formulate answers. Instead, questions are carefully selected, and enough time is allowed for the student to respond. Conferences focus on specific areas and are not designed to address all elements of writing. For example,

during the conference with the author of the essay shown in Apply the Concept 9.7, "My Best Football Game," the teacher realized that the writing had many problems. She was aware of grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. She was also aware that the story rambled, lacked sufficient details, and did not reflect the author's voice. However, she was ecstatic that this 14-year-old student with severe

9.7 Apply the Concept

Sample Student Writing "My Best Football Game"

Football is my favorite game I like to play it even when I was little I played for a good team the bandits and one game we played against Macarther school and it started off with us 0 and them 7 and then the game was tied 7 to 7 and then it was time for me to sit on the bench and the score was 7-14 we was winning soon they told me to go back into the game it was getting close to the end and we wanted to win they said it was my turn to run a play and so I ran fast down the feild after the ball was Mike and I look back and see the ball coming right at me and I thought I was going to miss it but I kept looking at it and after I watched it I reached up and pulled the ball down and I kept on running and we won the game 7 to 21.

emotional problems had produced a piece of writing that he was excited about. Apply the Concept 9.8 presents the conference the teacher had with the student.

Some key points about conferring with students follow:

- Do not attempt to get the writer to write about a topic because it is of interest to you or to write the story the way you would write it.
- Ask the student what steps in the writing process the student used to develop this piece.
- If you have taught one of the previously presented strategies (e.g., POW), ask the student to review how he applied the strategy.
- Ask questions that teach. (Apply the Concept 9.9 illustrates a conference in which the teacher asks questions that teach.)

- Agree on the steps the student will take to improve the paper, and establish a procedure for checking that these activities occur.
- Conferences should be frequent and brief. Although conferences can range from 30 seconds to 10 minutes, most of them last only 2 to 3 minutes with younger children and longer with older students.

Establishing a Writing Community For students to write well within their classroom, an environment of mutual trust and respect is essential. Establishing a writing community requires that you take the following steps:

1. *Write every day for at least 30 minutes.* Students need time to think, write, discuss, rewrite, confer, revise, talk, read, and write some more. Good writing takes time.

9.8 Apply the Concept

Conferencing with the Author of “My Best Football Game”

Teacher: Mark, this football game was a special one for you. I bet you have a lot of feelings about this game. What are some of your feelings about this game?

Mark: I felt good.

Teacher: Did you feel good like when you remember your homework or was it stronger than that?

Mark: It was stronger. I felt great. Like I was a hero or something.

Teacher: Like a hero?

Mark: Yeah, like in the movies. I really saved the game. Well, I guess not really saved the game because we were already winning. But it was, like, 'cause I made the last touchdown it really said something.

Teacher: What do you think it said?

Mark: It said, hey, watch out 'cause I'm good. Also, that we won and I scored the final points. It was great.

Teacher: What could you do so the reader of your piece would know all of the things you just told me?

Mark: I guess I could include more about how I felt and all.

Teacher: How could you do that? Where would it go?

The teacher decided it was too early to focus on mechanical errors such as spelling and punctuation. Besides being discouraging to Mark, focusing too early on mechanical errors would sidetrack this writer from the story. After the author's story is complete, then work on mechanical errors can begin.

9.9 Apply the Concept

Conferencing: Following the Lead of the Student

During conferences, the teacher listens to what students say, follows the lead of the students, and asks questions that teach:

Teacher: How's it going, Karin?

Karin: Not very good. I don't know what to write about.

Teacher: You are having trouble with a topic?

Karin: I was going to write about how I want to go and live with my real mom again but I don't know what to say. All I do is write that I want to live with my real mom and then the story is over.

Teacher: It's hard to think of what else might go in the story?

Karin: Well, yeah. I guess I could tell why, but I don't know why, I just want to.

Teacher: Would it be any easier to get started if you told the story as though it were about someone else?

Karin: Like I could tell about a kid who wanted to go and live with her real mom. Then I could tell it like a story.

Teacher: What are some of the things you might write if you told the story this way?

2. *Encourage students to develop areas of expertise.* Younger students write about what they know. However, with encouragement, both younger and older students can become experts in a particular area, subject, or writing form.
3. *Keep students' writing in folders.* Folders should include writing as documentation of what each student knows and has accomplished. Students can refer to their work to illustrate their progress, to indicate skills learned, and to demonstrate range of topic.
4. *Monitor students' progress, establish writing goals, and hold students accountable for learning and practicing what they know.* Together, identify the expected goals for each student, discuss what aspects of these goals are achieved and represented in their writing, and guide rewriting and skills lessons to ensure that these goals are met.
5. *Share writing.* Provide training to students and opportunities for them to share and give feedback to each other.
6. *Expand the writing community outside the classroom.* Place published books by your students in the library for use by other students, and allow students to share their writing with other classes. Encourage authors from other classrooms to visit and read their writings.
7. *Develop students' capacity to evaluate their own work.* Students need to develop their own goals and document their progress toward them.
8. *Facilitate spelling during writing.* Teachers and students can provide instructional feedback to support students in spelling correctly during the writing process. (See Apply the Concept 9.10 for suggestions.)
9. *Assist students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.* With a few adjustments, teachers can create classroom communities that promote their success and learning. See Apply the Concept 9.11 for suggestions.
10. *Remember to teach students specific strategies for writing purposefully,* such as compare and contrast, reports, persuasive writing, and interviews.

The writing process approach to instruction of students who have special needs requires time—time to follow the progress of students, confer with students, and teach skills. Most important, it requires time each day for the students to write. (See Apply the Concept 9.12.)

9.10 Apply the Concept

Providing Instructional Feedback to Facilitate Spelling Correctly

Prompts to Help Students Notice Errors

- Check to see if that looks/sounds right.
- There is a tricky word on this line.
- You are nearly right.
- Try that again.
- Try it another way.
- You have almost got that. See if you can find what is wrong.

Prompts to Help Students Find Errors

- Find the part that is not right.
- Look carefully to see what's wrong.
- You noticed something was wrong.
- Where is the part that is not right?
- What made you stop?
- Can you find the problem spot?

Prompts to Help Students Fix Errors

- What do you hear first? Next? Last?
- What word starts with those letters?
- Do you think it looks/sounds like?

- What does an e do at the end of a word?
- What do you know that might help?
- What could you try?
- You have only one letter to change.
- That sounds right, but does it look right?
- One more letter will make it right.
- It starts like that. Now check the last part.
- Did you write all the sounds you hear?
- Did you write a vowel for each syllable?
- It starts (ends) like ____.
- There is a silent letter in that word.
- You wrote all the sounds you hear. Now look at what you wrote—think!

Prompts of Encouragement

- I like the way you worked that out.
- The results are worth all your hard work.
- You have come a long way with this one.
- That was some quick thinking.
- That looks like an impressive piece of work.
- You are right on target.
- You are on the right track now.
- Now you have figured it out.

- That is quite an improvement.
- That is quite an accomplishment.
- That is coming along.
- You are really settling down to work.
- You have shown a lot of patience with this.
- You have been paying close attention.
- You have put in a full day today.
- I knew you could finish it.
- You make it look so easy.

- You have really tackled that assignment.
- This shows you have been thinking/working.
- It looks like you have put a lot of work into this.

Sources: Adapted from I. C. Fountas & G. S. Pinnell, *Guided Reading: Good First Teaching for All Children* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996); I. C. Fountas & G. S. Pinnell, *Word Matters: Teaching Phonics and Spelling in the Reading/Writing Classroom* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998); and E. B. Fry, J. E. Kress, & D. L. Fountoukidis, *The Reading Teacher's Book of Lists* (New York: Center for Applied Research in Education, 1993).

9.11 Apply the Concept

Considerations for Students Who Are Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Creating a learning community in the classroom that provides opportunities for all students to succeed is essential to promoting effective written expression. A few guidelines follow:

- Have high expectations for all students. Teachers demonstrate respect and provide opportunities when they treat each student as an able writer and provide the support necessary to ensure their success.
- Allow students to write about topics they know and have experienced. Students with diverse backgrounds and experiences should be viewed as having a rich source of material for writing. Students benefit when they are encouraged to tap into their backgrounds and experiences and to share them with others.
- Allow students to teach all of us about their backgrounds and experiences through their writing. Students' writing

can be viewed as an opportunity for them to better inform us about themselves, their families and communities, and their interpretations of them. Students will want to write when they perceive that their writing has a purpose and is instructive to others.

- Create a classroom setting that is culturally compatible. The social organization of the classroom can facilitate or impair the written expression of students from diverse cultures. Whole-class instructional formats with high expectations for students to volunteer answering questions may not be compatible with their cultural backgrounds. Read and ask questions about the cultures of the students in your classroom so that you can establish a writing lab that is responsive to their learning styles.
- Use materials, stories, and books that are culturally relevant. Read stories about a range of cultures to students. Encourage students to exchange stories that are culturally familiar. Provide examples of cultures that are similar and different from the ones represented in your classroom.

Using Technology to Facilitate Writing

The use of spell checkers and speech-to-text technology to facilitate writing effectiveness for students with LD has been well documented (Graham & Perin, 2007; Haug & Klein, 2018; MacArthur, 1988; McNaughton, Hughes, & Ofiesh, 1997). Though students may be familiar with texting and typing, they often do not see how learning to write in school relates to their informal writing (Vue et al., 2016). Technology tools can assist students whose spelling or handwriting interferes with their ability to develop high-quality writing. Displaying writing digitally facilitates discussion between students and teachers and allows for immediate and easy editing (Zorfass, Corley, & Remz, 1994). When a speech-to-text program was provided to college students with LD, the students performed significantly better on tasks of written

expression than did students without the speech recognition program and as well as those who had an assistant (Higgins & Raskind, 1995).

Computers and tablets facilitate writing for students with learning problems because they do the following:

- Make revising and editing easier.
- Increase the amount and quality of revision completed.
- Provide spell-checking features.
- Produce neat printed copies that enhance readability.
- Allow for easy error correction (MacArthur, Graham, Schwartz, and Schafer, 1995).
- Increase the amount of time they spend on the task (Wade-Stein & Kintsch, 2004).
- Improve the quality of writing (Wade-Stein & Kintsch, 2004).

9.12 Apply the Concept

Ten Pointers for Teaching Writing to Students with Special Learning Needs

1. Allocate adequate time for writing. Adequate time is a necessary but not sufficient criterion for improving the writing skills of special learners. Students who merely spend 10 to 15 minutes a day practicing the craft of writing are not spending adequate time to improve their skills. Students need a minimum of 30 minutes of time for writing every day.

2. Provide a range of writing tasks. Writing about what students know best—self-selected topics—is the first step in writing. After students' skills improve, the range of writing tasks should broaden to include problem solving, writing games, and a variety of writing tasks.

3. Create a social climate that promotes and encourages writing. Teachers set the tone through an accepting, encouraging manner. Conferences between students, students and teachers, and students and other persons in the school are conducted to provide constructive feedback on their writing and to provide an audience to share what is written.

4. Integrate writing with other academic subjects. Writing can be integrated with almost every subject that is taught. This includes using writing as a means of expression in content-area subjects such as social studies and science as well as part of an instructional activity with reading and language arts.

5. Focus on the processes central to writing. These processes include prewriting activities, writing, and rewriting activities.

6. During the writing phase, focus on the higher-order task of composing, and attend to the basic elements of

spelling and punctuation after the writing is complete. Some students' mechanics of writing are so poor that they interfere with the students' ability to get ideas down on paper successfully. With these students, focus first on some of the basic elements so that the writing process can be facilitated.

7. Teach explicit knowledge about characteristics of good writing. The implicit knowledge about writing needs to be made explicit. For example, different genres and their characteristics need to be discussed and practiced.

8. Teach skills that aid higher-level composing. These skills include conferencing with teachers and peers, and strategy instruction. Strategy instruction may provide guidelines for brainstorming, sentence composition, or evaluating the effectiveness of the written piece.

9. Ask students to identify goals for improving their writing. Students can set realistic goals regarding their progress in writing. These goals can focus on prewriting, writing, and/or rewriting. Both the students and the teacher can provide feedback on how successful the students have been in realizing their goals.

10. Use instructional practices that are associated with improved writing for students. Several examples of instructional practice not associated with improved writing are grammar instruction, diagramming sentences, and overemphasis on students' errors.

Sources: Adapted from S. Graham & K. Harris (2006), Preventing writing difficulties: Providing additional handwriting and spelling instruction to at-risk students in 1st grade, *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 38(5), pp. 64–66; and S. Graham & K. R. Harris (1988), Instructional recommendations for teaching writing to exceptional students, *Exceptional Children*, 54(6), pp. 506–512.

Response to Intervention and Writing

How might response to intervention be used for students with writing difficulties? Students with extreme writing challenges might be provided extra time each day (20 minutes) and extra instruction to determine if their writing improves. Specific research-based strategies might be implemented (Mason et al., 2011). Teachers can maintain copies of students' writing to determine if adequate progress in writing has occurred. During intervention time, teachers provide struggling writers extra instruction in skills that pose the most difficulty—spelling, handwriting, and planning (Arrimada, Torrance, & Fidalgo, 2018). Self-regulation strategies are also important components of writing intervention (Limpo & Alves, 2018).

Improving the Writing of Older Students

Most of the practices described in this chapter are designed to be used with a broad range of learners. However, the

crisis in the overall poor quality of students' writing has provided a push for improving the writing of older students. The Carnegie Corporation of New York (Graham & Perin, 2007) issued a report on effective writing practices for older students (grades 4 to 12). They suggest the following research-based practices:

- Teach students writing strategies that include planning, revising, and editing their compositions. (Many of the writing strategies discussed previously were developed to meet this recommendation.)
- Help students combine sentences to achieve more complex sentence types and to summarize texts.
- Provide opportunities for students to work together in pairs and groups toward cooperative written products to facilitate quality of composition.
- Establish goals for students' writing to improve outcomes.
- Give students access to and instruction in word processing to facilitate writing.

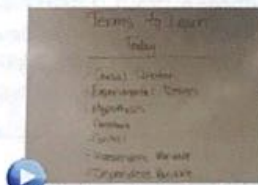
- Assist students in developing prewriting practices that help generate or organize ideas for writing.
- Use inquiry activities to analyze data related to writing reports.
- Provide extended time for writing and revision.
- Provide students with good models of writing to study and to compare with their own writing.
- Use writing as a tool to enhance content knowledge.

Teaching Writing in the Content Areas

The **Common Core State Standards** encourage reading and writing of information text. In fact, by fourth grade, half of what students read and write about should include information text. All of the content areas, but particularly social studies, history, and science, provide excellent resources for writing. As students enter high school, they are applying writing increasingly within their academic disciplines (e.g., history), addressing such questions as “What role and influence did Ben Franklin have after the Revolution?” These kinds of questions encourage students to read authentic texts, to integrate across texts, and to formulate their own response (Turner & Kearns, 2010; Spire, Kerkhoff, Graham, Thompson, & Lee, 2018).

MyLab Education Video Example 9.4

The science teacher in this video discusses how she encourages her students to learn the scientific process, use content area vocabulary, and enhance their hypothesis-writing skills. How can these strategies be used in other content area classes?



What are the key Common Core Standards as they relate to promoting writing in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects in grades 6 to 12?

- Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content. Teachers facilitate students' use of text and other resources to make and justify claims.
 - Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes. Students learn to use discipline-specific constructs and ideas and relate them across resources, providing elaborate descriptions and justifications for their conclusions.
 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing in planning, revising, editing, and rewriting for a specific audience and purpose.
 - Use technology to produce, publish, and update individual and shared writing, making adjustments as a function of feedback.
 - Conduct research projects to address questions (generated by teachers and self-generated), synthesizing findings from multiple sources.
 - Gather and use relevant credible information from multiple sources.
 - Use evidence from information texts to analyze, reflect, and research.
 - Write routinely over extended time frames, including time for reflection and revision for a range of discipline-specific tasks.

As you can see from this summary of the Common Core Standards as they relate to writing in the content area, students with learning and behavior problems will have increased expectations for writing across all of their content areas. For students with writing difficulties, special education teachers will increasingly need to provide instruction and support to ensure that they can meet these demands. What are some instructional practices you can implement to facilitate success in writing in the content areas? Some useful practices include the following:

1. Teach students how to determine whether texts and other resources are credible. Identify topics your students are studying, for example, “cells” in biology, or “westward movement” in history. Ask students to search for information on the Web related to these topics. After they identify information, ask them to “rate” on a 1 to 3 scale their confidence in the credibility of the information and how they determined the rating. Provide feedback and guidance until students improve in locating credible resources.
2. Assist students in using more than one resource to formulate a claim. Initially, start with two resources that are rather brief and have similar ideas. Gradually move to showing students more complex and original resources. Ask students to determine their key points, ways they agree and disagree, and how they might use the documents to write and support a claim. Gradually increase in difficulty and reduce support until students can write independent claims.
3. Facilitate assignments that require students to revise and contribute to a long-term written product. Using topics and research reports required in their content-area classes, assist students in organizing and writing to develop a research report that depends on sources, responds to ongoing teacher and peer feedback, and

develops over a long period (multiple classes and homework assignments).

4. Time spent on writing instruction in the content area facilitates improved writing and improved learning of the content (Klein & Kirkpatrick, 2010). Many teachers worry that additional time spent on writing during content instruction will detract from content learning, but effective instruction of writing within the content area benefits learning as well.

Berninger and Wolf (2009) provide sample lessons on teaching writing in the content area for students with writing difficulties.

See Spotlight on Diversity: Guidelines for Teaching Writing to Students Who Are English Language Learners.

Web Resources

For additional Web resources related to students who are English language learners, see <http://colorincolorado.org>.

Assessing and Teaching Spelling

What are the critical features of spelling assessment and instruction for students with learning and behavior problems? Most students with learning and behavior disorders need specific instruction in spelling and handwriting, largely as a function of their phonological awareness

Chapter 7 discusses phonological awareness.

problems and their inadequate exposure to print. The core phonological deficit is associated with not only reading problems but also spelling problems. Also, students with reading problems read fewer words; therefore, through spelling instruction, they are exposed to the orthography of spelling related to improved spelling.

Manuel hates spelling and finds it the most frustrating part of writing. He is an eighth-grade student who is adjusting to the transition from a self-contained classroom for students with emotional disabilities to a resource room in a middle school setting. He has learned to use writing to express his feelings, convey information, and create stories. Manuel is proud of the way his writing has improved, and he often shares his stories with others. But he has difficulty with spelling. Manuel has learned to use inventive spelling (spelling words the way they sound or the way he thinks they are spelled) to aid in getting his ideas on paper, but he has difficulty editing because he is unable to detect or correct most of his spelling errors. Like many students with learning and behavior disorders, Manuel needs specialized instruction in spelling to be a successful writer.

Spelling is an important tool in our society. Many people measure one's intelligence or education by their ability to spell. Spelling is particularly difficult in the English language because no a one-to-one correspondence exists between the individual sounds of spoken words and the letters of the written words. Spelling instruction is particularly important for students with reading disabilities because they demonstrate difficulties in spelling long term (Newman Fields, & Wright, 1993; Squires & Wolter, 2016). We learn to spell many words by remembering the unique combination or order of letters that produce the correct

Spotlight on Diversity

Guidelines for Teaching Writing to Students Who Are English Language Learners

Students' writing is influenced by several factors: their knowledge of the English language; English vocabulary development; understanding of word use; and knowledge of the conventions of writing, such as noun-verb agreement. Many of the approaches to writing that are discussed in this chapter are highly appropriate for students who are English language learners (ELLs). Teachers should ask themselves the following questions when planning writing instruction for students who are ELLs (Cloud, Genesee, & Hamayan, 2009; Haley & Austin, 2004):

- Do they know what they want to write about?
- Do they feel comfortable using their personal, family, and other relevant experiences in their writing?
- Do they use what they know to support their writing?
- What ways are helpful to get them to start thinking about their composition?
- Do they try to use new words in their writing?
- Do they get suggestions for their writing from family and friends?
- Do they use procedures for deciding what is important and not important in their writing?
- Do they choose different ways to express their ideas and feelings in their writing?
- Do they increasingly use more appropriate and effective language in their writing?

spelling of that word. We also learn to spell words by being taught the word parts such as blends (/str/, /cl/, /pr/), as well as silent-letter rules (long vowel with silent e), to help us become better spellers (Moats, 2009).

Spelling facilitates the writing process by freeing the writer to concentrate on content. Although many students with LD have spelling difficulties, spelling is often difficult even for those without an LD. Most beginning writers identify spelling as the key problem they need to solve in writing. Many good readers are poor spellers, and almost all poor readers are poor spellers. The spelling of older students with reading disabilities is similar to the spelling of average readers who are much younger (Bourassa, Treiman, & Kessler, 2006).

Error Analysis

The first step in developing an appropriate spelling program is to determine the type and pattern of the students' spelling errors. After completion of an error analysis, a spelling approach based on students' needs can be implemented.

Error analysis should be done by using both dictated spelling tests and a student's written work. When Manuel and his teacher, Laurie Redwing, attempted to develop Manuel's spelling program, they began by selecting samples of his written work, which included writing he had created and work written from dictation. Ms. Redwing examined these pieces to determine whether his spelling errors conformed to a pattern. Ms. Redwing asked herself the following questions about Manuel's spelling:

- Is he applying mistaken rules?
- Is he applying rules that assist him in remembering spellings?
- Is he making careless errors on words he knows how to spell?
- Is he spelling words correctly in isolation but not in context?
- Are there frequently used words that he is consistently misspelling?

After examining the written work and answering these questions, Ms. Redwing discovered the following:

- Manuel did not apply the *-ing* rule appropriately. For example, *run* became *runing*.
- Manuel did not use the spelling rule "i before e except after c." For example, he spelled *believe* as *beleive* and *piece* as *peice*.
- He was inconsistent in spelling words. He would spell them correctly in one piece of written work but not in another.
- He spelled several words correctly on spelling tests but not in context.
- He misspelled many frequently used words, such as *there*, *was*, *because*, *somewhere*, *very*, and *would*.

After answering the questions, Ms. Redwing examined Manuel's work to look for the following error patterns:

- Additions of unneeded letters (e.g., *boxxes*).
- Omissions of letters (e.g., *som*).
- Reflections of mispronunciations (e.g., *ruf* for *roof*).
- Reflections of dialect (e.g., *sodar* for *soda*).
- Reversals of whole words (e.g., *eno* for *one*).
- Reversals of consonant order (e.g., *cobm* for *comb*).
- Reversals of consonant or vowel directionality (e.g., *Thrusday* for *Thursday*).
- Phonetic spellings of nonphonetic word parts (e.g., *site* for *sight*).
- Neographisms, which are spellings that don't resemble the word (e.g., *sumfin* for *something*).
- Combinations of error patterns.

In addition to examining Manuel's work, Ms. Redwing interviewed and observed Manuel to determine what strategies he used when he was unable to spell a word and whether he used any corrective or proofreading strategies after he wrote. Ms. Redwing observed Manuel's writing and then asked him the following two questions:

1. *When you finish writing a piece, what do you do?* (Ms. Redwing was attempting to determine whether Manuel rereads for spelling errors.)
2. *If you are writing and do not know how to spell a word, what do you do?* (Ms. Redwing was attempting to determine what, if any, strategies he used. Did he use invented spelling to facilitate the writing process and underline the word so that he could check the spelling later? Did he stop and try to visualize the word or look for how it was spelled in another location? Did he continue writing and go back later to check the spelling?)

Ms. Redwing discovered that Manuel used few strategies to check or recall spelling when he was writing. In addition to teaching and rehearsing spelling rules, Manuel needed to learn and apply strategies for improving his spelling. After error analysis, intervention included discussing with Manuel the types of errors he was making, and then teaching him proofreading skills, techniques for remembering the correct spelling of words, and one of the spelling approaches discussed in the following subsections. Before looking at specialized approaches to teaching spelling to students with learning and behavior disorders, we will first examine traditional approaches to spelling instruction.

Traditional Spelling Instruction

Spelling is taught in most classrooms through an integrated reading and writing approach. Some classroom teachers prescribe a list of weekly words to be mastered by all students (Fresch, 2007). In the usual procedure, a pretest occurs

MyLab Education
Video Example 9.5

The teacher in this video assists students in learning new spelling words. How does she model the learning process? What opportunities do the students have to practice using their new spelling words?



on Monday, followed on Tuesday by a description of the spelling theme (e.g., long *e* words, homophones, *au* words). Wednesday and Thursday typically involve assignments from the text that entail practice spelling the key words or using them in sentences and that students work on independently. These assignments usually include dictionary activities; sentence or paragraph writing using the spelling words; writing the words a designated number of times; and using the words in sentences, stories, or crossword puzzles. Friday is usually designated for the posttest in spelling.

How effective is this procedure for teaching spelling to students with LD? What other procedures might need to be considered in developing effective spelling strategies for these students? The spelling practices used in most classrooms are based more on tradition than on research (Fresch, 2007). For most students with learning difficulties, the introduction of all the words at once, often words that are not in the students' reading vocabularies, and the lack of systematic practice and specific feedback make spelling difficult, if not impossible. A more effective approach is to teach students the common spelling patterns (Squires & Wolter, 2016; Treiman, 2017). Students with LD acquire proficiency as spellers when they read and write words with similar spelling patterns. Students need to know the meaning of words they spell and should be asked to learn only a small number of words at a time.

Phonics Rules for Spelling

How much emphasis should be placed on teaching phonics rules to improve spelling? Evidence suggests that students who are taught spelling alongside code-based (phonics) reading instruction improve in both spelling and word reading (Moats, 2009; O'Connor & Jenkins, 1995; Squires & Wolter, 2016; Treiman, 2017). At least for young children, a code-based approach to reading and spelling is likely to be both necessary and helpful. Students with learning problems require systematic and explicit instruction in phonics rules and how these rules relate to writing words. Thus, students need to be taught the clear connection between phonics rules in reading and spelling.

Because in phonics rules lack consistency, primary emphasis should be given to basic spelling vocabulary with supplemented instruction in basic phonics rules as well as the meanings of word parts and influence of vocabulary.

For example, the word parts associated with prefixes and suffixes convey meaning, as do base words such as *friend* (e.g., *friendship*, *friendly*, *friendless*). Knowing the meaning of words also helps with spelling. For example, in English many words sound the same but are spelled differently (e.g., *there*, *their*). The spelling conveys the meaning. Teaching students common *homonyms*—words that sound the same, are spelled differently, and convey different meaning—can help them be better spellers and writers. A sample of common homonyms follows:

- To, too, two
- Pain, pane
- Whether, weather
- Witch, which
- Accept, except
- Great, grate

Principles for Teaching Spelling to Students with Learning Difficulties

Several principles should be included in any spelling approach that is used in teaching students who have learning problems.

Teach in Small Units Teach 3 words a day rather than 4 or 5 (or 15 at the beginning of the week). In a study (N. D. Bryant, Drabin, & Gettinger, 1981) in which the number of spelling words allocated each day to students with LD was controlled, higher performance, less distractibility, and less variance in overall performance were obtained from the group with LD assigned 3 words a day, when compared with groups assigned 4 and 5 words a day.

Teach Spelling Patterns If the spelling lists each week are based on spelling patterns, students have a better chance of learning and remembering them (Squires & Wolter, 2016). Several sample word lists based on patterned spelling follow:

List 1	List 2	List 3	List 4
cat	am	aim	pianos
bat	slam	claim	cellos
rat	clam	chain	patios
fat	tram	rain	sopranos
sat	tam	train	stereos
can	Pam	gain	potatoes
fan	same	regain	studios
ran	fame	brain	ratios
man	tame	pain	volcanoes
tan	blame	afraid	echoes
	flame	braid	
	frame		

You may also want to use contrast words to assist in identifying and teaching spelling patterns. Thus, the

spelling patterns in the fourth list provide two contrasting patterns for adding *s* to words that end in *o*.

Provide Sufficient Practice and Feedback Give students opportunities to practice the words each day and provide feedback. Many teachers do this by having students work with spelling partners who ask them their words and provide immediate feedback. The following method can be used for self-correction and practice. Fold a paper into five columns. Write the correctly spelled words in the first column. The student studies one word, folds the column back, and writes the word in the second column. The student then checks this spelling against the correctly spelled word in the first column. After folding the column back, the student writes the word in the third column. The student continues writing the word until it has been spelled correctly three times. The student then moves to the next word and continues until the word is spelled correctly three times in a row. This procedure should not be confused with spelling assignments that require the student to write the assigned spelling words a designated number of times. Those procedures are often ineffective because the student does not attend to the details of the spelling word as a whole, often writes the word in segments, and usually copies rather than writing from memory. The student also fails to check words each time after writing, sometimes resulting in words being practiced incorrectly. Adding peer tutoring can help to alleviate these problems (see Apply the Concept 9.13).

Select Appropriate Words The most important strategy for teaching spelling is that the students can already read the word and know its meaning. Spelling should not focus on teaching the students to read and know the meaning of words. Selection of spelling words should be based on the students' reading and meaning vocabularies. Ideally, high-frequency words should be used.

Teach Spelling Through Direct Instruction Incidental learning in spelling is reserved primarily for good spellers.

9.13 Apply the Concept

Peer Tutoring and Spelling

Use of peer tutors to teach spelling can be helpful in improving spelling for the tutors and the tutees. When a peer-tutoring system was used with students with LD and a good speller from the same classroom, the spelling performance of the student with LD improved and both students rated the peer-tutoring system favorably (Maheady & Gard, 2010; Okilwa & Shelby, 2010). To increase effectiveness, peer tutors should be trained to implement the spelling approach that is most suitable for the target student.

Spelling words can be selected from the students' reading or written words or can be part of a programmed text, such as lists provided in basal readers. Direct instruction includes mastery of specific words each day, individualized instruction, and continual review.

Use Instructional Language The language of instruction, or the dialogue between teachers and students, is critical to success in spelling, particularly for students with learning and behavior problems. Gerber and Hall (1989) indicate that a teacher's language provides a structure that calls attention to critical relationships within and between words and also isolates critical letter sequences. Here is an example: "You wrote 'nife'; however, the word *knife* starts with a silent letter. It is very unusual, and you just have to remember that it is there. Think about the letter *k* as looking like an open jackknife, and remember that the word *knife* starts with a *k*."

How do you implement peer tutoring for spelling? Several different approaches are available (for a review, see Maheady & Gard, 2010), but a simple way to get started follows:

1. Arrange for students to work in pairs. Some teachers assign pairs so that a better speller and a poorer speller work together.
2. Provide students with explicit directions for working together. For example, say: "You will practice 4 words each day until you can spell them without error. You will review the previous words you learned that week to make sure you don't forget them."
3. "Test each other on the words for the day and the previous words for the week. Use the spelling practice strategy if you miss a word."
4. "Provide points to each other based on the number of words spelled correctly at the end of the session."
5. "Provide positive feedback and support to your teammate."

The Classwide Peer-Tutoring Approach A teacher's individual help is preferable, but the realities of the classroom frequently make individualized instruction difficult to offer. Structured peer tutoring can be a viable alternative. Delquadri, Greenwood, Stretton, and Hall (1983) have demonstrated the efficacy of the "Peer Tutoring Spelling Game" at all grade levels. The game takes about 15 minutes and includes the following procedures:

1. Tell the students they will be playing a new game that is like basketball, only it will help them learn to spell words. In this game, they will make "baskets" (2 points) and "foul shots" (1 point).
2. On Monday of each week, teach the list of new words.
3. Assign students to tutor pairs: One is speller 1 and one is speller 2.

4. Speller 1 says a word, while speller 2 writes it on his paper. Speller 2 then orally spells the written word.
5. If the word is correct, speller 1 says, "Correct! Give yourself 2 points!" and speller 2 marks a "2" on his list. If the word is incorrect, speller 1 points to, pronounces, and spells the missed word orally. Speller 2 then writes the word correctly three times before moving to the next word.
6. When completed, speller 1 becomes speller 2 and vice versa.
7. Ask each student to report his or her points and record them on the individual score chart.
8. Announce the team winner for the week, and post the winner on the team chart.

Maintain Previously Learned Words For maintenance of spelling words, assign previously learned words as review words and intersperse them with the learning of new spelling words. Students need to review previously learned words frequently to maintain them. After students have mastered spelling words, provide opportunities for students to see and use spelling words in context. Remember, students are more likely to spell words correctly in isolation immediately after preparing for a test than they are to spell the word correctly in context. Providing ongoing review in context for correct spelling is necessary.

Motivate Students to Spell Correctly Using games and activities, selecting meaningful words, and providing examples of the use and need for correct spelling are strategies that help to motivate students and give them a positive attitude about spelling.

Include Dictionary Training As part of the spelling program, dictionary training should be developed, which includes alphabetizing, identifying target words, and locating the correct definition when several are provided. Some students can keep a list of words they frequently misspell.

Spelling Approaches

Many approaches to teaching spelling are available, and no single approach has been proven superior to others for all students with LD. Some students learn effectively with a multisensory approach, such as the Fernald method; others learn best with a combination of several approaches. A synthesis of spelling interventions (Wanzek, Vaughn, Wexler, Swanson, & Edmonds, 2006) indicated that spelling practices that provide students with spelling strategies or systematic study and word practice methods yield the highest rates of spelling improvement. Other approaches, including sensorimotor activities and technology supports for spelling, resulted in a slight advantage for students over

students in comparison conditions. Following are several approaches to teaching spelling, all of which make use of the principles discussed in the previous section.

Test-Study-Test Method This method of learning spelling words is superior to the study-test method (Fitzsimmons & Loomer, 1978; Yee, 1969). In using the test-study-test method, students are first tested on a list of words and then instructed to study the missed words. Strategies are taught for recalling the correct spelling of these words. These strategies often include verbal mediation—saying the word while writing it or spelling it aloud to a partner. After instruction and study, students are then retested. Using this process, students then correct their own spelling test, which is an important factor in learning to spell.

Several word-study techniques that can be applied in using the test-study-test method are presented in Figure 9.13.

Visualization Approach This approach to spelling teaches students to visualize the correct spelling as a means to recall. The visualization approach uses the following procedures:

1. On the board or on a piece of paper, the teacher writes a word that students can read but cannot spell.
2. Students read the word aloud.
3. Students read the letters in the word.
4. Students write the word on paper.
5. The teacher asks the students to look at the word and "take a picture of it" as if the students' eyes were a camera.
6. The teacher asks the students to close their eyes and spell the word aloud, visualizing the letters while spelling it.
7. The teacher asks the students to write the word and check the model for accuracy.

The Five-Step Word-Study Strategy This strategy requires students to learn and rehearse the following five steps and practice them with the teacher and then alone. The steps are as follows:

1. Say the word.
2. Write and say the word.
3. Check the word.
4. Trace and say the word.
5. Write the word from memory and check.
6. Repeat the first five steps.

When students learn this technique, the teacher models the procedure, then the students practice the procedure with assistance from the teacher, and finally the students demonstrate proficiency in the application of the procedure without teacher assistance (Graham & Freeman, 1986).

Figure 9.13 Effective Word-Study Procedures

SOURCE: S. Graham (1999), Handwriting and spelling instruction for students with learning disabilities: A review, *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 22(2), pp. 78–98. Reprinted with permission.

Kinesthetic Method (Graham and Freeman, 1986)

1. Say the word.
2. Write and say the word.
3. Check the word and correct if needed.
4. Trace and say the word.
5. Write the word from memory, check it, and correct if needed.
6. Repeat steps one through five.

Copy-Cover-Compare (Murphy et al., 1990)

1. Examine the spelling of the word closely.
2. Copy the word.
3. Cover the word and write from memory.
4. Check the word and correct if needed.
5. If spelled correctly, go to next word.
6. If spelled incorrectly, repeat steps one through four.

Connections Approach (Berninger et al., 1998)

1. Teacher says word, points to each letter, and names it.
2. Child names word and letters.
3. Child shown a copy of the word with the onset and rime printed in different colors.

4. Teacher says the sound and simultaneously points to the onset and rime in order.
5. Child looks at, points to, and says the sound of the onset and rime in order.

Simultaneous Oral Spelling (Bradley, 1981)

1. Teacher reads the word.
2. Child reads the word.
3. Child writes the word saying the name of each letter.
4. Child says word again.
5. Teacher examines correctness of written response; child corrects if needed.
6. Repeat steps one through five two times.

Visual Imagery (Berninger et al., 1995)

1. Look at word and say its name.
2. Close your eyes and imagine the word in your mind's eye.
3. Name letters with your inside voice.
4. Open eyes and write word.
5. Check spelling and repeat steps one through four if the word is not spelled correctly.

Johnson and Myklebust Technique D. J. Johnson and Myklebust (1967) suggest working from recognition to partial recall to total recall when teaching new spelling words. Recognition can be taught by showing students a word and then writing the word with several unrelated words, asking the students to circle the word they previously saw. The task can gradually be made more difficult by writing distracting words that more closely resemble the target word. In teaching partial recall, the correct word can be written with missing spaces for completing the spelling under it. For example:

with

w ____ th

wit ____

____ ith

wi ____

w ____

Total recall requires students to write the word after another person pronounces or to write the word in a sentence. This approach gives repeated practice and focuses students on the relevant details of the word. D. J. Johnson and Myklebust (1967) also suggest that when initial spelling tests are given, the teacher may need to say the word very slowly, emphasizing each syllable. As students learn to spell the words correctly, the teacher gives the test in a normal voice and at a normal rate.

Cloze Spelling Approach The cloze spelling approach is so called because students need to supply missing letters systematically in much the same way that students supply words in the cloze reading procedure. The cloze spelling approach uses a four-step process for teaching students to spell words.

1. *Look-study.* Students are shown the word on a card. Students look at the word and study the letters and their order.
2. *Write missing vowels.* Students are shown the same word on a card with blanks where the vowels usually appear. Students write the entire word, supplying the missing vowel(s).
3. *Write missing consonants.* Students are shown the word with blanks where the consonants usually appear. Students write the entire word, supplying the missing consonant(s).
4. *Write the word.* Students write the word without the model.

Fernald Method Fernald (1943) believed that most spelling approaches were useful for the extremely visual student but not for students who need auditory and kinesthetic input for learning. Because poor spellers are characterized as having poor visual imagery, many may need to be taught through multisensory approaches, such as the Fernald method.

According to Fernald (1943), specific school techniques that tend to produce poor spellers include the following:

- Formal spelling periods in which students move through a series of practice lessons, writing and taking dictation with little time to think about how the word is spelled before writing it.
- A focus on misspellings and spelling errors, which builds a negative attitude toward spelling.

A brief description of the Fernald approach to teaching spelling includes the following procedures:

1. The teacher writes the word to be learned on the chalkboard or paper. The word can be selected from the spelling book or by the students.
2. The teacher pronounces the word clearly. The students repeat the pronunciation of the word while looking at the word. This is done several times for each word.
3. The teacher allows time for students to study the word for later recall. For those students who are kinesthetic learners, the teacher writes the word in crayon and has students trace the letters of the word with their finger. Fernald found that tracing is necessary in learning to spell only when the spelling difficulty is coupled with a reading disability.
4. The teacher removes the word and has the students write it from memory.
5. The students turn the paper over and write the word a second time.
6. The teacher creates opportunities for students to use the word in their writing.
7. The teacher gives written, not oral, spelling drills.

In contrast with Fernald's approach, which recommends not focusing on the student's errors and suggests blocking out errors immediately, other researchers have found some support for a spelling strategy that emphasizes imitation of students' errors plus modeling (J. Kauffman, Hallahan, Haas, Brame, & Boren, 1978; Nulman & Gerber, 1984). Using the imitation plus modeling strategy, the teacher erases the misspelled word and imitates the child's error by writing it on the board. The teacher then writes it correctly with the student and asks the student to compare what she wrote with the correct spelling of the word.

Gillingham and Stillman Approach According to Gillingham and Stillman (1973), spelling is taught by using the following procedures:

1. The teacher says the word very slowly and distinctly, and students repeat the word after the teacher. This is referred to as *echo speech*.
2. Students are asked what sound is heard first. This process continues with all of the letters in the words. This is referred to as *oral spelling*.

3. The students are asked to locate the letter card with the first letter of the word on it and then to write the letter. Students continue with this process until the card for each letter is found, placed in order, and written. This is referred to as *written spelling*.
4. Students read the word.

When writing the word, students orally spell the word letter by letter. This establishes visual-auditory-kinesthetic association.

Correctional procedures in the Gillingham and Stillman approach include the following:

1. Students check their own written words and find errors.
2. If a word is read incorrectly, the students should spell what they said and match it with the original word.
3. If a word is misspelled orally, the teacher writes what the students spelled and asks them to read it, or the teacher may repeat the pronunciation of the original word.

Constant Time-Delay Procedure The time-delay procedure is designed to reduce errors in instruction. Stevens and Schuster (1987) applied the procedure this way:

1. The verbal cue "Spell _____ (target word)" is immediately followed with a printed model of the target word, to be copied by students.
2. After several trials in which no time delay occurs between asking students to spell a word and providing a model of the word, a 5-second delay is introduced. This allows students to write the word, or part of the word, if they know it but does not require them to wait very long if they are unable to correctly write the word.
3. The amount of time between the request to spell the word and the presentation of the model can be increased after several more trials.

The time-delay procedure has been effective with students with LD and has several advantages as a spelling instructional method. It is a simple procedure that is easy to implement. Also, it is fun for students because it provides for nearly errorless instruction.

Self-Questioning Strategy for Teaching Spelling Wong (1986) describes the following self-questioning strategy for teaching spelling:

1. Do I know this word?
2. How many syllables do I hear in this word?
3. Write the word the way I think it is spelled.
4. Do I have the right number of syllables?
5. Underline any part of the word that I am not sure how to spell.

6. Check to see whether it is correct. If it is not correct, underline the part of the word that is not correct, and write it again.
7. When I have finished, tell myself I have been a good worker.

Morphographic Spelling Morphographic spelling provides a highly structured and sequenced approach to teaching remedial spelling (Dixon & Engelmann, 2001). This teacher-directed approach assumes that students have some spelling skills and begins with teaching small units of meaningful writing (morphographs). Students are taught to spell morphographs in isolation, then to combine them to make words. Critical components of this instructional approach to spelling include error correction and feedback (including positive feedback), cumulative review, distributed practice, and highly sequenced lessons.

Several helpful videos provide information about spelling instruction: Go to www.youtube.com and search for several videos, such as **Teaching Spelling Skills Using Sound and Teaching Spelling in the 21st Century**.

Web Resources

For a helpful website on instructional practices related to writing and spelling, see <http://www.readingrockets.org>.

Instructional Practices in Spelling

Most students with LD have problems with spelling. Yet students with LD have been the focus of relatively few research studies on spelling acquisition. Findings from two syntheses on effective spelling practices for students with LD (Gordon, Vaughn, & Schumm, 1993; Wanzek et al., 2006) yield the following instructional practices:

1. *Providing a weekly list of words.* Students benefit when teachers provide a weekly list of words that are taught. This procedure allows students to practice words throughout the week. Monitoring correct use of these words in writing and then following up on accuracy in spelling with these words is valuable. (See instructional practice 3 in this list for the number of words taught and how they should be distributed.)
2. *Error imitation and modeling.* Students with LD need to compare each of their incorrectly spelled words with the correct spellings. The teacher imitates the students' incorrect spelling and, beside it, writes the word correctly. The teacher then calls attention to features in the word that will help students remember the correct spelling.

3. *Allocate three spelling words per day.* Students with LD learn to spell fewer words correctly and experience greater frustration when they are required to study a long list of words. Reduce the number of words assigned at any one time to approximately three words per day, and provide effective instruction for those words.

4. *Modality.* It has long been thought that students with LD learn to spell most easily when their modality preferences are considered. Students with LD learn equally well whether spelling by writing the words, arranging and tracing letter shapes or tiles, or typing the words on a computer. However, most students prefer to practice their spelling words on a computer. Because students' preferences are likely to affect their motivation to practice, teachers are wise to consider students' personal preferences.

5. *Computer-assisted instruction.* Computer-assisted instruction (CAI) has been shown to be effective in improving the spelling skills of students with LD. CAI software programs for spelling improvement often incorporate procedures that emphasize awareness of word structure and spelling strategies, and make use of time delay, voice simulation, and sound effects. Such capabilities make the computer an instructional tool with much potential to aid and motivate students with LD in learning to spell.

6. *Peer tutoring.* See the Peer Tutoring Spelling Game (Delquadri et al., 1983), described earlier in the chapter in the section titled Principles for Teaching Spelling to Students with Learning Difficulties.

Teaching Handwriting and Keyboarding

What are the characteristics of students with handwriting problems, and what components should be included in an effective handwriting and keyboarding program?

Often described as the most poorly taught subject in the elementary curriculum, handwriting is usually thought of as the least important. However, handwriting is still a prominent activity in classrooms and proficient writers must have fluent and legible handwriting (Graham, 2018). Handwriting difficulties create barriers to efficient work production and negatively influence academic success and self-esteem (Feder & Majnemer, 2007). Many students dislike the entire writing process because they find the motor skill involved in handwriting so laborious. *Dysgraphia* refers to students with extreme difficulties with handwriting. Interestingly, drawing performance can serve as a screener for students with handwriting difficulties (Khalid, Yunus, & Adnan, 2010).

Despite the use of word processors, handheld computers, and other devices that can facilitate the writing process, handwriting remains an important skill. Taking notes in class, filling out forms, and success on the job often require legible, fluent writing.

Handwriting Problems

Students with dysgraphia have severe problems learning to write and may exhibit any or all of the following characteristics:

- Poor letter formation
- Letters that are too large, too small, or inconsistent in size
- Incorrect use of capital and lowercase letters
- Letters that are crowded and cramped
- Inconsistent spacing between letters
- Incorrect alignment (letters do not rest on a baseline)
- Incorrect or inconsistent slant of cursive letters
- Lack of fluency in writing
- Incomplete words or missing words
- Slow writing even when asked to write as quickly as possible

Fortunately, with direct instruction and specific practice, many of these problems can be alleviated (Berninger et al., 2006). A meta-analysis of handwriting studies showed that teaching handwriting results in increased legibility and fluency and contributes to overall writing improvement (Santangelo & Graham, 2016). Handwriting instruction is important for students with difficulties because such difficulties lead to reduced interest in writing and impairs quality of writing and spelling (Berninger, Abbott, Whitaker, Sylvester, & Nolen, 1995).

Reversals

When 5-year-old Abe signed his name on notes to his grandmother, he often reversed the direction of the *b* in his name. He often wrote other letters backward or upside down. His mother worried that this might be an indication that Abe was dyslexic or having reading problems. Many adults are concerned when children make reversals; however, most children age 5 and younger make reversals when writing letters and numbers. Reversals made by students before the age of 6 or 7 are not an indication that the student has LD or is dyslexic and are rarely cause for concern.

Teachers should recognize the following:

- Reversals are common before the age of 6 or 7. Teachers should provide correctional procedures for school-age

students who are reversing letters and numbers but should not become overly concerned.

- A few students continue to reverse numbers and letters after the age of 7 and may need direct intervention techniques.

For students who persist in reversing letters and numbers, the following two direct instructional techniques may be helpful:

1. The teacher traces the letter and talks aloud about the characteristics of the letter, asking the students to model the teacher's procedure. For example, while tracing the letter *d*, the teacher says, "First I make a stick starting at the top of the page and going down, and then I put a ball in front of the stick." Students are asked to follow the same procedure and to talk aloud while tracing the letter. Next, the students are asked to do the same procedure, this time drawing the letter. Finally, the students are asked to draw the letter and say the process to themselves.

2. The teacher and students can develop a mnemonic picture device that helps the students recall the direction of the letter. For example, with a student who is reversing the direction of the letter *p*, the teacher might say, "What letter does the word *pie* begin with? That's right, *pie* begins with the letter *p*. Now watch me draw *p*." Drawing the straight line, the teacher says, "This is my straight line before I eat pie, then after I eat pie my stomach swells in front of me. Whenever you make *p* you can think of pie and how your stomach gets big after you eat it, and that will help you make a *p* the right way." This procedure can be repeated several times, with the student drawing the letter and talking through the mnemonic device. Different mnemonic devices can be developed to correspond to the specific letter or number reversal(s) of the child. Berninger and colleagues (2006) reported that direct instruction with visual cues and memory delays with additional practice checks lead to reduced reversals.

Components of Handwriting

Teaching handwriting requires the teacher to assess, model, and teach letter formation, spacing, and fluency as well as posture, pencil grip, and position of the paper.

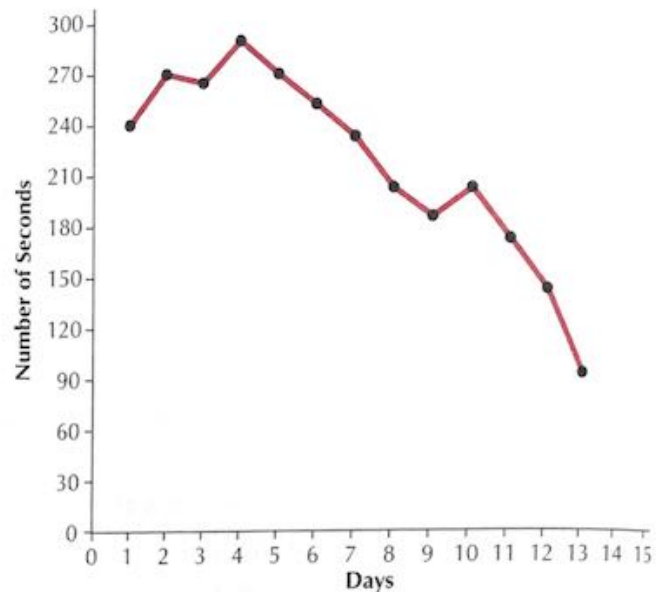
Legibility Legibility is the most important goal of handwriting instruction, and incorrect letter formation is the most frequent interference.

The following six letters account for many of the errors (48%) that students make when forming letters: *q*, *j*, *z*, *u*, *n*, and *k* (Graham, Berninger, & Weintraub, 1998). Spacing between letters, words, and margins; connecting lines; and closing and crossing of letters (e.g., *t*, *x*) also influence legibility.

Fluent Writing How does fluency relate to handwriting? Just as not knowing how to read words fluently impairs reading comprehension, inadequate fluency in writing letters and words impairs written expression and the quality of written responses (Spear-Swerling, 2006). For example, 9-year-old Nguyen's handwriting has improved considerably during the past year. She and her teacher have identified letters that were not formed correctly, and Nguyen has learned to write these letters so that they are legible. Now that her handwriting is easier to read, the teacher realizes that Nguyen has another handwriting problem. In the regular classroom, Nguyen has difficulty taking notes and writing down assignments that are given orally, because she is a very slow writer. She needs to learn writing fluency, which is the ability to write quickly and with ease, without undue attention to letter formation.

Nguyen's teacher decides to teach fluency by gradually increasing expectations about the speed at which letter formation occurs. Nguyen selects two paragraphs and is told to write them as quickly as she can while still maintaining good letter formation. The teacher times her in this procedure. They decide to keep a graph of Nguyen's progress by indicating the time it takes her each day to write the two paragraphs legibly. Nguyen finds that graphing her progress is very reinforcing (see Figure 9.14 and Apply the

Figure 9.14 Nguyen's Fluency



Concept 9.14). Because Nguyen's fluency problems were not just for copying but also for writing from dictation, her teacher implemented the same program, this time requiring Nguyen to time herself on oral dictations. Nguyen's time for completion of the passage decreased considerably over a 3-week period.

9.14 Apply the Concept

Obtaining a Handwriting Fluency Sample

The following procedures can be used to obtain a fluency sample:

1. Have the student become familiar with the test sentence.
2. Tell the student to write the test sentence a designated number of times at the student's usual rate (2- to 3-minute sample).
3. After the student relaxes, have the student write the sentence as well and as neatly as possible.
4. After the student relaxes, have the student write the sentence as quickly and as many times as can be done in 3 minutes.
5. After the student relaxes, repeat this process with the student, using the same sentence.

Instructional Activities

This section provides instructional activities that are related to written expression, including spelling and handwriting. Some of the activities teach new skills; others are best suited for practice and reinforcement of already acquired skills. For each activity, the objective, grades, materials, and teaching procedures are described.

Web Resources

For additional information on instruction in writing and spelling, see the International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English website, <http://www.readwritethink.org>.

Cubing

Objective: To help students develop preliminary ideas about the topic during the prewriting phase

Grades: Elementary through secondary

Materials: A cube-shaped outline, glue, scissors

Teaching Procedures:

1. Explain to students that the topic is like a cube that contains different information on each side. Topics can be explored from different angles.
2. Introduce six different ways in which the topic can be explored.
 - a. *Describe:* What does it look like?
 - b. *Compare:* What is it similar to? What is it different from?
 - c. *Associate:* What does it remind you of?
 - d. *Analyze:* What are the parts?
 - e. *Apply:* What can you do with it?
 - f. *Argue for or against:* Take a stand about your topic. Why is it good or why is it not good?
3. Pass out a cube-shaped outline to each student.
4. Have students write their ideas down on the cube-shaped outline. Students work through each side of the cube: describe, compare, associate, analyze, apply, and argue for or against the topic. (Depending on the topic, questions for each dimension will need to be adjusted.)
5. Have the students cut out the outline and glue it together to make a cube.

Extended Activity: The cube can be used as a resource in writing the essay.

Adapted from University of Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts (2000a, 2000b).

Writing Warm-Up

Objective: To help students, especially reluctant writers, gain writing experiences

Materials: Graph paper, colored pencils, timer for the teacher

Grades: Elementary through secondary

Teaching Procedures:

1. Explain to students that writing is like exercising. Tell them that writing practice can help them improve their writing and make the writing easier.
2. Choose a topic that will be easy for students to write about. Have students do a writing warm-up once or twice a week.
3. Introduce the day's topic (e.g., homework).
4. Ask students to write as much as they can about the topic for 3 minutes. Tell the students that they do not need to worry about spelling, grammar, or punctuation.
5. Set a timer for 3 minutes. When time is up, have the students put their pencils down and count the number of words they have written.
6. Have students graph the number of words they have written, using colored pencils and graph paper.
7. When students feel comfortable writing their ideas about the topic, introduce the next writing process (e.g., organizing their ideas, revising, editing).

Source: Adapted from University of Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts (2000a, 2000b).

Writing Reports

Objective: To help students prepare for a research report by providing guidelines for gathering information necessary for writing a research report

Grades: Secondary

Materials: Report-planning sheet (see Figure 9.15)

Teaching Procedures:

1. Explain to students that a report-planning sheet will help them to prepare for writing a research report. After filling out the planning sheet, they can use the information on the planning sheet to write their report.
2. Introduce the day's topic (e.g., volcanoes).
3. Pass out a planning sheet to each student.
4. Have students brainstorm a list of everything they know about the topic and write it down in the first column (i.e., What I Know).

Figure 9.15 Report-Planning Sheet

Topic: _____				
What I Know	What I Want to Find Out	Why I Want to Find Out	How I Will Find Out	What I Learned

- Have the students examine their brainstorming ideas carefully to identify the areas in need of further research. For instance, if a student knows names of active volcanoes but not much about how a volcano is formed, the student may want to study that. Have students identify what they want to study and write that down in the second column.
- In the third column, have students write down why they want to study the subtopic they selected.
- Have students think about a variety of sources where they can find information (e.g., science textbook, websites, etc.) on the subtopic and list those sources in the fourth column.
- Have students conduct their research and write down what they learn in the fifth column.
- After the students have completed the planning sheet, have them use that information to write the report.

Source: Adapted from Macrorie (1980) and Ogle (1986).

The Use of Graphic Organizers for Writing

Objective: To help students organize their ideas when writing first drafts

Grades: Elementary through secondary

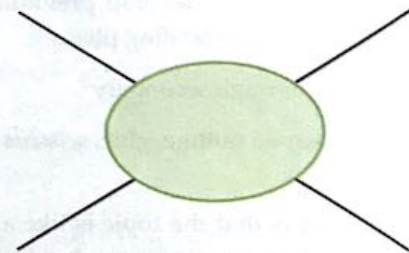
Materials: Copies of a graphic organizer (see Figure 9.16)

Teaching Procedures:

- Explain to students that graphic organizers can help them write their draft. (*Note:* Different types of graphic organizers are used depending on type of text.)
- Model how to use graphic organizers. For instance, write the topic in the center and supporting details on the branches on the graphic organizer. Then create sentences describing the topic by using ideas written on the graphic.

Figure 9.16 Graphic Organizer

Topic: _____



Sentence describing the topic:

- _____
- _____
- _____

- Introduce the topic, and pass out copies of a graphic organizer to each student.
- Have students use the graphic organizer as they write their draft with a partner, in a small group, or independently.
- After students finish filling out the graphic organizer and creating sentences, call on several students to share their drafts. Provide feedback on their drafts.

Source: Adapted from Nancy and Dill (1997).

Peer Editing

Objective: To provide students with opportunities to edit a revised draft as one part of the editing process

Grades: Elementary

Materials: Student-generated revised draft, peer-editing checklist (see Figure 9.17)

Figure 9.17 Peer-Editing Checklist

	Yes	No	Edits Made
1. Does each sentence end with a period, question mark, or exclamation point?			
2. Does each sentence start with a capital letter?			
3. Is each sentence a complete sentence?			
4. Is the first sentence of each paragraph indented?			
5. Did my partner check my spelling (by using dictionary and/or thesaurus)?			

Teaching Procedures:

1. Explain to students that editing focuses on correcting technical aspects of writing.
2. Introduce each of the five editing points on the checklist:
 - a. End punctuation
 - b. Beginning capitalization
 - c. Complete sentences
 - d. Indented paragraphs
 - e. Spelling check
3. Pair students, making sure that each pair consists of a good writer and a poor writer.
4. Pass out peer-editing checklists to each pair, and ask students in pairs to exchange their revised drafts.
5. Have the good writer in each pair edit the partner's draft by following editing steps, which are outlined on the peer-editing checklist. If a step is followed, a check mark should be placed in the Yes column after that step. If a step is not followed, then a check should be placed in the No column.
6. While the student is completing the checklist, have the partner correct errors, if any, and record what corrections were made in the Edits Made column.
7. Repeat the procedure, this time with the poor writer editing the partner's draft by following the editing steps.

Source: Adapted from University of Texas Center for Reading and Language Arts (2001b).

Peer Revision

Objective: To give students an opportunity to work together in pairs to elaborate on their writing as one part of the revision process

Grades: Elementary through secondary

Materials: Student-generated rough draft, sticky notes

Teaching Procedures:

1. Explain to students that good writers get help from their friends and colleagues to improve their writing. One way to do this is to get ideas for elaborating or expanding on what you have already written. Each student needs a rough draft that is ready to be revised (and is neat enough to be read by another student and checked by the teacher).
2. Students work in pairs to complete the following revision steps:
 - a. Have a student read the rough draft out loud to the partner. While the student is reading, the student may catch a few mistakes. Encourage the student to correct them.
 - b. Have the partner read through the rough draft, focusing on the content. The partner makes three sticky-note comments and puts them on the rough draft. One comment is positive (e.g., "I really liked the part where . . ."). The other two comments are helpful (e.g., "Tell me more about . . ." and "I don't understand the part where . . .").
 - c. Repeat the process with the second partner.
 - d. Have each student work individually to elaborate on the draft by addressing the peer sticky-note comments.

Acrostic Writing in the Content Areas

Objective: To help students improve their understanding of content through acrostic writing

Grades: Secondary

Materials: Content-area textbook

Teaching Procedures:

1. Explain to students that they will write a poem about what they have read (e.g., the unit on Native Americans in social studies).

- Review important information on the previously studied unit (e.g., Native Americans), and create a semantic map by writing the name of the tribe they read about (e.g., Apache) on the blackboard, asking the students to share what they have read about this tribe (prompt the students if necessary), and recording the students' responses on the blackboard.
- Have students write a poem to describe important characteristics of the Apache by using each letter in it to create one sentence. For instance,

Amazing hunters who once enjoyed a nomadic style of life

Powerful nation of warriors

Adaptable people who learned to tend fields of maize, beans, pumpkins, and watermelons when buffalo became scarce

Courageous Indians known for their resistance to the U.S. government

Hut building, farming, trading, and horse riding were necessary for survival of this proud nation

Epidemics of smallpox and other European diseases almost decimated the once-large tribe
- Call on several students to share their poems. Provide feedback on their poems in terms of the writing styles and the content.

Source: Adapted from Bromley (1999).

Proofreading with SCOPE

Objective: To teach students a mnemonic strategy (SCOPE) to help with proofreading their writing

Grades: Upper elementary through secondary

Materials: Student-generated writing piece that needs to be edited

Teaching Procedures:

- Discuss with students how they can get into difficulty if they are not sufficiently skilled at proofreading their papers before they submit them and therefore get low grades because their papers have many errors.
- Teach the students SCOPE, a mnemonic strategy that will assist them in proofreading their work before they submit it:

Spelling: Is the spelling correct?

Capitalization: Are the first words of sentences, proper names, and proper nouns capitalized?

Order of words: Is the syntax correct?

Punctuation: Are there appropriate marks for punctuation where necessary?

Express complete thought: Does the sentence contain a noun and a verb, or is it only a phrase?

- Next, demonstrate using SCOPE with a sample piece of writing on an overhead projector.
- Give the students ample practice and opportunity to apply SCOPE to their own work.

Interview a Classmate

Objective: To give students practice in developing and using questions to obtain more information for the piece they are writing

Grades: Upper elementary through secondary

Materials: Writing materials and a writing topic, a list of possible questions, an audio recorder (optional)

Teaching Procedures:

- Using the format of a radio or television interview, demonstrate and role-play mock interviews with sports, movie, music, and political celebrities. (*Note:* Give students opportunities to play both roles.)
- Discuss what types of questions allow the interviewee to give elaborate responses (e.g., open questions) and what types of questions do not allow the interviewee to give an expanded answer (e.g., closed questions). Practice asking open questions.
- Use a piece that you are writing as an example, and discuss whom you might interview to obtain more information. For example, "In writing a piece about what it might have been like to go to the New York World's Fair in 1964, I might interview my grandfather, who was there, to obtain more information."
- Ask students to select an appropriate person to interview for their writing piece and write possible questions.
- In pairs, have students refine their questions for the actual interview.
- Have students then conduct interviews and later discuss how information from the interview assisted them in writing their piece.

What Would You Do If . . . ?

By Alison Gould Boardman

Objective: To give students experience developing ideas for narrative writing and following simple story structure

Grades: Upper elementary and middle school

Materials: Pencil, drawing paper, writing paper

Teaching Procedures:

- Have students fold a piece of drawing paper so that there are four squares.
- Ask students what they would do if they were invisible for 24 hours. Share ideas, and probe students to

add details (e.g., "You would go to the moon. Great, how would you get there? Would you take anyone with you?"). Tell students that now that they have some ideas, they are going to make a rough drawing of four possible things they would do if they were invisible for 24 hours.

- Students should use pencil or one color to draw pictures of their ideas, one in each quarter of the page. Pictures can be rough drawings or sketches. The purpose of the drawings is to help students generate interest in and remember what they want to write about without the pressure of having to write it down.
- Begin with the introduction. Students write about how they become invisible. For the body of the story, students choose three of their four ideas to expand on. They use their pictures and build from there. The ending of the story details what happens when they become visible again and concludes their invisible day.

Adaptations: This assignment can be repeated with topics (from the teacher or students) such as, What would you do if you could fly, run 50 miles an hour, drive a car, etc.? Depending on students' skill levels, the length and content requirements can be adjusted.

Step-by-Step Cartoon Writing

By Alison Gould Boardman

Objective: To give beginning or reluctant writers experience in sequencing steps, using transition words, and writing a paragraph

Grades: Elementary

Materials: Index cards without lines, colored pencils, tape, writing materials

Teaching Procedures:

- Discuss as a group the types of things students do to get ready for school in the morning.
- Tell students that they will be drawing a comic strip about what they do when they get up in the morning.
- Have students draw one event on each index card (e.g., waking up, getting dressed, eating breakfast). Encourage the students to add detail to their pictures to help them remember exactly what happens.
- Have students put their ideas in order and tape the cards together like a comic strip.
- Before the students begin writing, have them use their comic strip as a guide to help them tell the story out loud. Encourage students to use transition words such as *first*, *next*, *later*, and *finally*. Teachers can post a list of transition words for students to use while telling and writing their paragraphs.
- Have students write one descriptive sentence about each frame of their comic strip to form a paragraph.
- Attach the final copy of the paragraph to the comic strip and display in the classroom.

Adaptations: Students can use this procedure to write any sequenced or how-to paragraph, such as how to bake a cake, make a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich, play checkers, or make a bed.

MyLab Education Self-Check 9.1
MyLab Education Self-Check 9.2
MyLab Education Self-Check 9.3
MyLab Education Application Exercise 9.1:
Assessing and Teaching the Writing Process

MyLab Education Application Exercise 9.2:
Teaching Spelling

MyLab Education Application Exercise 9.3:
Teaching Handwriting



Summary

- For many students with learning and behavior problems, writing is one of the most difficult things that they do, asking them to use skills they have not mastered well, such as spelling and handwriting. Teachers need to consider these negative associations when they set up a writing program that encourages students to explore and expand their writing ability while practicing the writing conventions that students will need to express themselves effectively. Assessment practices that include ongoing progress monitoring of the accuracy of letter formation, speed of writing, and quality of writing provide important feedback to teachers as they alter their writing instruction. The physical environment, or setting, is an important feature that sets the tone for writing.
- Many students with learning and behavior problems do not benefit from traditional approaches to spelling (e.g., weekly word lists) and need instruction in phonics rules and how these rules relate to writing words. The first step is to conduct a spelling error analysis to identify which spelling patterns students understand and which they misunderstand. Through ongoing instruction in these spelling patterns and progress monitoring to determine learning, teachers can integrate assessment and instruction for improving spelling outcomes for their students. Teachers should teach in small units, and cluster new words according to spelling patterns. They should allow time for students to practice new words, provide feedback, and maintain previously learned words through frequent reviews. Finally, they can motivate students by making spelling fun.
- Handwriting difficulties often result in spelling difficulties, low motivation to write as well as poor academic performance, low work production, and reduced self-esteem. Weaknesses in handwriting can be assessed by examining legibility, fluency, and hand position and can usually be remediated with direct instruction and specific practice. Principles of instruction include using a variety of techniques to provide direct instruction that is specific to a student's individual handwriting needs. Provide short, frequent instruction in handwriting skills and many opportunities to practice. Skills should be thoroughly learned in isolation and then applied in the context of the student's writing assignment. Students should evaluate their own handwriting and use the teacher as a model. Handwriting should also be taught as a combined visual-motor task. For each student, teachers assess, model, and teach the needed skills as well as provide opportunities for practice and feedback.