

CHAPTER 10

Strategies for Written Language

Proficiency at written communication is a critical skill in society today. Student learning in the schools is evaluated, to a great extent, on the basis of written products such as essay tests, reports, and written homework answers (Graham, 2006). Writing also can enhance students learning; writing about a topic can actually improve students' comprehension (Graham & Hebert, 2010). Additionally, more and more states now require students to pass a writing proficiency test to graduate from high school (Zabala et al., 2007). Proficient writing skills are also critical for entry into the job market and success after entry regardless of whether the job is blue collar or white collar (Graham & Harris, 2011). There is now compelling evidence (Salahu-Din, Persky, & Miller, 2008) that a majority of American students need to improve their writing skills, so improving writing skills is a critical concern. The situation is even more serious for students with disabilities. Graham and Harris (2011) noted that among these students 19 of 20 do not acquire sufficient written fluency for success in school. Thus many students with LD and ADHD are at an immediate academic disadvantage and a longer-range risk for difficulty in gaining employment due to problems with written expression.

There are three likely reasons for why these students experience difficulties with writing. First, writing is a difficult and demanding task requiring attention to multiple processes. Not only do students need to learn to attend to the mechanics of text production (as discussed in the previous chapter), they also need to develop effective and efficient composition skills (Graham & Harris, 2003). Negotiating and coordinating basic skills, knowledge, and conventions of written language is often difficult for skilled writers; for students with LD or ADHD it may be overwhelming. Second, skilled writers use strategies to plan, write, and revise their compositions, whereas students with

LD or ADHD often lack effective strategies. Moreover, writing requires constant self-regulation and attention control. The ability to regulate and monitor one's own composing process is an important part of writing (Graham & Harris, 2003). Finally, as Graham and Harris (2011) note, many teachers are simply not well prepared to teach writing because few teacher preparation courses provide instruction in evidenced-based writing practices.

PROBLEMS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Students with LD often experience greater difficulties with writing than their nondisabled peers. It is well documented that the writing of students with LD is less polished, coherent, expansive, and effective (Englert & Raphael, 1988; Graham, 1990; Graham & Harris, 1989; Montague, Graves, & Leavell, 1991; Newcomer & Barenbaum, 1991; Wong, Wong, & Blenkinsop, 1989). Although students with LD represent a heterogeneous population, there are some commonalities that can be noted. Wong (2000) identified five areas in which students with LD differ significantly from their nondisabled peers:

1. Students with LD have difficulty expressing their ideas in writing.
2. Students with LD tend to have a warped conception of what constitutes good writing. They focus on the mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, etc.) versus clarification and organization.
3. Students with LD use unproductive strategies to make up for their limited vocabularies. When they are unable to find or spell the appropriate word to express their thoughts, they tend to substitute another, simpler word that does not fully communicate what is intended.
4. Students with LD make quantitatively more mechanical errors.
5. Students with LD require more practice to achieve mastery of a writing strategy.

Students with LD typically do not see writing as a purposeful way to communicate and control the world around them, and even if they do, they are often not equipped with appropriate strategies to facilitate their ability to produce effective written communication. Writing instruction should help students develop a more sophisticated approach to composing (Graham, Harris, & McKeown, in press). Students with LD must learn that creating composition is a process involving mastery of three critical recursive elements—(1) planning, (2) organizing, and (3) revising—as well as attention to mechanical aspects of composition (Wong, 2000).

Planning

For students with LD, planning for writing involves, at best, minimal effort. These students often choose a single composition approach: the solitary act of generating written content (Graham & Harris, 2003). They tend to jump right into writing before doing any sort of planning; Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987) termed this behavior *knowledge telling*.

Any information relevant to the topic is written down without regard to organization, goals, or audience; there is minimal metacognitive control (Graham & Harris, 1997). Little attention is directed toward the goal of the composition, which is to express an idea or thought through written communication.

A main objective of writing strategy instruction for students with LD is to enable them to become more planful. Students must be taught to integrate some of the same types of planning strategies, or schemas, that skilled writers utilize. One of the most effective ways to do this is through direct instruction of planning strategies such as brainstorming or semantic webbing. The strategy *STOP and LIST* prompts students to be more planful. *STOP* and *LIST* (stop, think of purpose, and list ideas, sequence them) encourages students to identify the purpose of their paper, brainstorm ideas, and organize those ideas (Troia & Graham, 2002). The use of such a strategy prior to writing can lead to more planful, organized compositions.

Organizing

Englert and Mariage (1991b) noted two kinds of organizational knowledge that influence skilled writers' performance:

1. *Understanding and recognizing recurring patterns or text structures.* A writer's ability to recognize and appreciate that text has structures and to use cues related to those structures is crucial to successful composition and comprehension of texts. One of the first text structures to which students are exposed is narrative text structure. Students often understand and recognize narrative or story structure first.

Unfortunately, students with LD are often unaware of patterns or structures in text. They do not analyze text or recognize recurring patterns in text that they read or to which they are exposed. Therefore, they do not utilize these patterns while generating their own compositions. When given a topic, they simply start writing what they know about it, letting each thought prompt the next; minimal effort is made to assess what is written or to regard the constraints of the topic, audience needs, or text organization (Graham & Harris, 2003). Instruction for students with LD must address these issues.

2. *Employing strategies specific to the writing domain.* Organization of written compositions is largely a strategic task. Instructing students to utilize appropriate organizational strategies will help them to be understood by others, as well as improve their ability to interpret and negotiate the meaning of text (Englert & Mariage, 1991b). While composing, students with LD often fail to employ effective or efficient writing strategies to guide composition generation; as a result written work is often difficult and discouraging for both students with LD and their teachers. Directly teaching organizational patterns and strategies to guide composition has proven to be highly effective in improving academic performance of students with LD (Harris & Graham, 1992). Enabling students to utilize appropriate organizational strategies will help them to interpret and negotiate the meaning of their texts, as well as make themselves understood by others (Englert & Mariage, 1991a).

Revision and Mechanics

Revision skills for students with LD often emphasize the mechanics of writing, including handwriting, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and format, rather than revising for clarity of meaning. This is understandable considering that the writing of students with LD is often laden with mechanical errors, including malformed letters, misspelled words, and errors in punctuation and capitalization (Graham & Harris, 2003). These errors inevitably affect students' written compositions, as well as their execution of the writing process. Having to attend to obstacles such as how to spell a word or write a letter can interfere with students' writing flow, leading them to forget writing plans or ideas being held in their working memory. Students who have difficulty with handwriting can likewise lose ideas or plans because their handwriting is not fast enough to keep up with their thought processes (Graham & Harris, 2003).

Students with LD tend to focus their revision efforts on these mechanical errors. They employ a "thesaurus" approach, focusing on word substitutions when trying to enrich their compositions, as well as attempting to "clean up" spelling, grammar, punctuation, format, and other mechanical errors. They are focused on the overall appearance of the composition. These changes are only partly effective; the quality of the composition or clarity of meaning generally remains unchanged (Graham & Harris, 2003).

PREREQUISITE SKILLS

As we noted in the previous chapter, it is essential to consider the prerequisite skills necessary for a student to be a successful writer, not the least of those being transcription skills. These are basic skills that include handwriting and spelling. Proficient writing requires mastery of these basic transcription skills in order for attentional resources to be focused on the greater task at hand: writing a composition for meaning. If students have not yet mastered the mechanics of writing and need to concentrate on putting their language onto paper, they are unable to attend to higher-level skills, such as planning and organizing. For young writers these basic transcription skills can be so demanding it may be necessary to minimize writing tasks (Graham & Harris, 2000).

Graham and Harris (2003, p. 325) cited three sources of information supporting the effect of mechanical difficulties on writing output.

1. Handwriting fluency and spelling account for 66% and 41% of the variability in writing output of primary and intermediate grade students, respectively (Graham et al., 1997).
2. Removal of mechanical demands through dictation usually results in a corresponding increase in written output (De La Paz & Graham, 1995). For instance, the length of stories produced by fifth- and sixth-grade students with LD tripled when they were asked to dictate rather than write or type their compositions (MacArthur & Graham, 1987).
3. Providing extra handwriting instruction for poor writers has a positive impact on their writing output (Berninger et al., 1997, 1998).

It may be necessary to adjust demands on students' transcription skills in order to promote effective and efficient composition skills.

INSTRUCTION IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The process of writing requires frequent reexamination and reworking of text, as well as multiple opportunities for practice. Research suggests that effective writing instruction involves scaffolded writing activities that teach students common structures of composition, as well as actively involving them in the writing process. In the sections that follow, we provide examples of strategies for teaching narrative and expository text structures, as well as strategies for editing and revising.

Narrative Text Structure Strategies

Narrative text structure is one of the first structures to which students are exposed; not surprisingly it is also one of the earliest composition structures acquired by students. Stories follow a pattern that is easily understood by students: setting, episode, and conclusion. Often narrative texts are structured around a main character, a conflict presented to the main character, the action or goal of the main character for solving the problem, outcomes of the actions, and the story conclusion (Englert & Mariage, 1991a). Utilizing students' knowledge of story structure to teach them composition skills is highly beneficial. Students who are aware of the basic parts of a narrative text are often more successful at writing stories as well as understanding stories that they have read.

WWW, What = 2, How = 2

Narrative compositions require students to possess a basic understanding of story structure. Although story structure may be familiar to students, they still may be unclear about how to use it to compose a complete story. Graham and Harris (1989) utilized Story Grammar elements, prompting students, through five steps and a series of questions, to generate narrative prose. These steps and questions encourage students to include all necessary components of a complete narrative composition.

A series of five steps is used to assist students in the composition process. The third step includes the mnemonic *WWW, What = 2, How = 2* to help students remember the critical questions of that step (see Table 7.1 in Chapter 7). In Step 1 students are initially prompted to *think of a story that they would like to share with others*. Considering their audience and what their audience's needs and wants are is important. Most of the time, these factors set the tone for the composition. Students are then reminded, in Step 2, to *let their mind be free*. This instruction is intended to increase students' focus on the task of composing by encouraging them to free their minds of distractions and focus on their story.

The third step of the strategy prompts students to *write down the story part reminder: WWW, What = 2, How = 2*. This mnemonic-aided step helps students start to plan and organize their stories, keeping in mind the essential components of a narrative. Having students write down the questions before they start writing down their ideas ensures that they will attend to each of the essential components, not just start writing without consideration of these crucial elements. In the fourth step students are asked to *write down story part ideas for each story part*. This is where the students get to add their ideas.

Answering the story part questions help students with the initial generation of content for their own stories. In the final step, students put together all of their ideas into a complete story. Students are reminded to *use good parts* and *make sense*. After all of the steps are completed, students should have a narrative composition that is (1) interesting to their audience, (2) easy to follow, and (3) possesses all the essential components of a good story. Detailed lesson plans for WWW, What = 2, How = 2 are commercially available (see Harris et al., 2008).

C-SPACE

The *C-SPACE* strategy (MacArthur, Schwartz, & Graham, 1991) is another strategy based on Story Grammar elements. *C-SPACE* is an acronym for character, setting, problem, action, conclusion, and emotion. It can also be used to help students learn to write personal narratives, which are stressed in many elementary curriculums. Organizational strategies to help students plan and write narratives or stories are typically included in instruction of *C-SPACE*. Detailed lesson plans for using *C-SPACE* for personal narratives and story writing are commercially available (see Harris et al., 2008; Mason et al., 2012).

Story Map

Knowledge of text structure can provide a map for students to produce well-developed compositions. A graphic organizer (Figure 10.1), such as the one created by Englert, Raphael, and Anderson (1985), can provide a template for student composition. Such an organizer can prompt students to consider which ideas to include, how to organize those ideas, and when the composition is complete (Englert & Mariage, 1991b). This organizer can be used for both composition generation and reading comprehension.

Expository Text Structure Strategies

The concept of using a schema or plan, such as WWW, What = 2, How = 2 or a story map, to produce narrative prose can also be utilized with various expository compositions. The use of strategies or schemas for composing single-genre essays is a good place to start with emergent writers. Teaching students one form of writing enables them to concentrate on basic structural concepts. We started with narrative compositions because of the familiarity of that form of text to young writers. However, various expository text structures can be similarly taught.

Understanding and utilizing text structure are essential to composition. Different text structures can be used for planning, organizing, and drafting various types of expository text. It is important to understand that each type of expository text structure answers different questions, such as these: What is alike? What is different? How are they the same? What is being explained? The answers to these questions are indicated by a range of meaning and sentence structure systems. Certain key word indicators can be found in either topic sentences or concluding sentences. For example, "Fresh water and salt water fish are similar in many ways, yet they are very different in others."

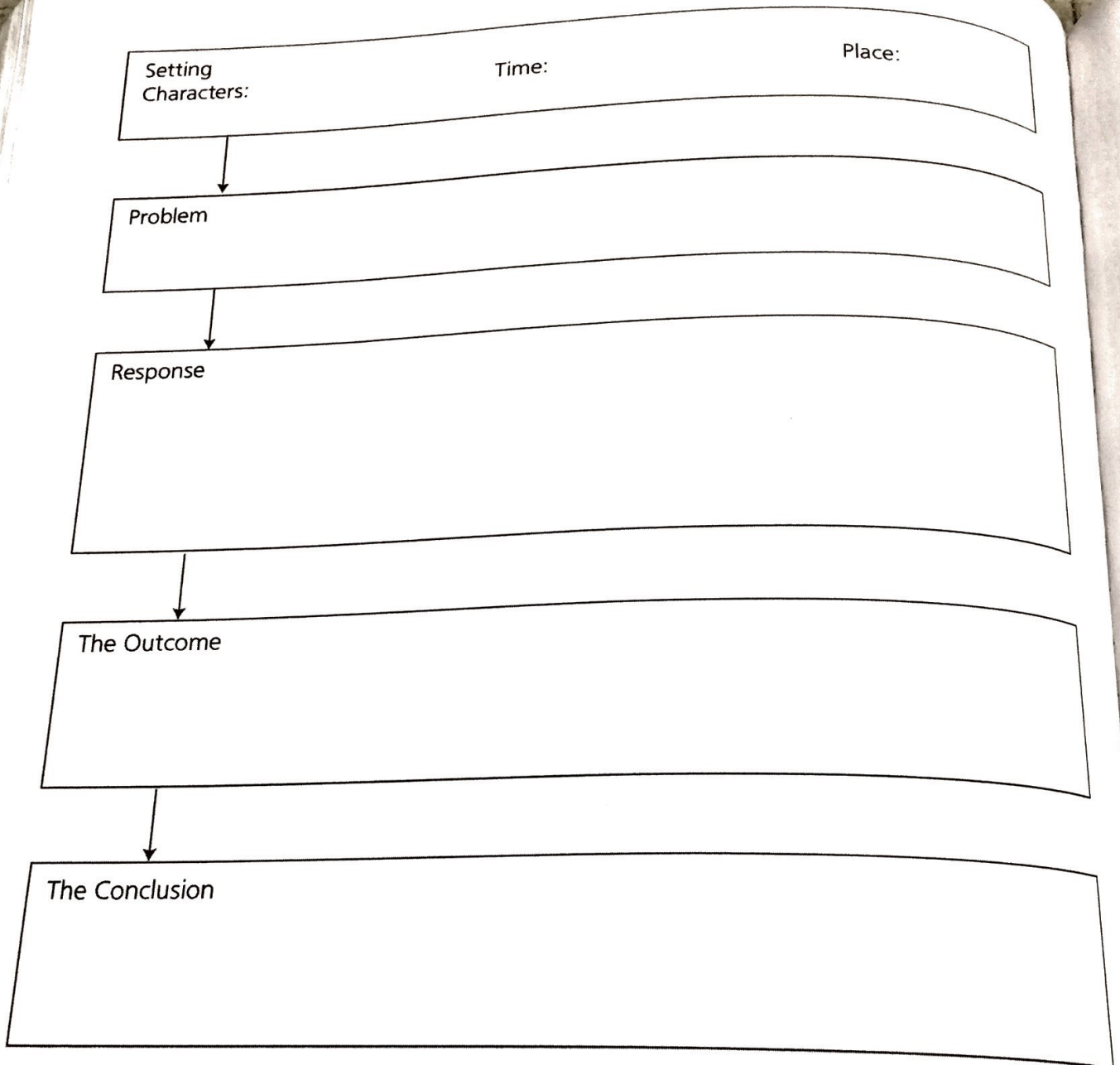


FIGURE 10.1. Story Grammar map/narrative planning guide. From Englert, Raphael, and Anderson (1985).

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The structure of this topic sentence and the key words (*similar, yet different*) are indicators of a compare-contrast composition (Englert & Mariage, 1991a). Students with LD often have difficulty picking up on these cues in text. They may understand that a text is explaining what is similar or different about two entities; however, they are often unaware of how the piece is structured. Explicit instruction about various text structures is necessary.

POW + TREE

The TREE strategy (Graham et al., 1987) can be used to guide students' composition of opinion essays. The TREE strategy is composed of four self-directional prompts used to guide the fundamental form of an opinion essay. To most effectively use the TREE strategy, students are taught to use it within a general three-step planning strategy: POW (Table 10.1). The POW strategy is used to frame the writing process; TREE is used to organize the written prose. First, students are asked to pick an idea. Picking an idea helps students narrow their focus and begin to conceptualize what they will be writing about. Then students are prompted to organize their notes using TREE. Students organize their thoughts and ideas in the fashion of a typical opinion essay, starting with a topic sentence, which is the first step in TREE. Students are taught that a topic sentence tells readers what they believe clearly and concisely. The topic sentence makes the author's opinion clear.

Students are then asked to provide three or more reasons to support their opinion. These reasons should then be supported with examples. Students are prompted to ask themselves, "Why do I believe this?" and "Will my readers believe this?" These questions not only help students to elaborate and support their opinions, they also prompt them to consider the audience's thoughts on their rationale. The final step in the TREE strategy is the ending. Students need to write a concluding statement that wraps up their thoughts and opinions. The final or ending statement should let the reader know that the essay is complete. This statement ends the paper and usually reiterates the opinion. The final step in POW is to write and say more. Students are prompted to

TABLE 10.1. The POW + TREE Strategy

<u>P</u>	Pick my idea.	
<u>O</u>	Organize my notes using TREE.	
	<u>Topic Sentence</u>	Tell what I believe.
	<u>Reasons</u>	Three or more.
	<u>Examples</u>	Why do I believe this? Will my readers believe this?
	<u>Ending</u>	Wrap it up right!
<u>W</u>	Write and say more.	

Note. Based on Graham, Harris, and Mason (2005).

check over their compositions for completeness. If any areas are found that need further development, students should work on them until the composition is complete and fully expresses their opinion.

POWER

Englert and colleagues (1985; Englert & Raphael, 1988; Englert, Raphael, & Anderson, 1985) developed an organizational writing strategy called *POWER* that organizes all the steps in the writing process and teaches students different organizational structures for composition. The *POWER* strategy can be used with various text structures and in combination with pattern guides for writing. These pattern guides include the compare-contrast structure (Figure 10.2), the explanation structure (Figure 10.3), and the narrative or story structure (Figure 10.1). The example provided in Figure 10.1 can be used for the narrative or story structure pattern guide. The first step in the *POWER* strategy is planning. Students are encouraged to focus on three areas: (1) the audience for the paper, (2) the purpose of the paper, and (3) the background knowledge that is necessary to write the paper. These areas provide students with a solid foundation to build their composition. The second step is organizing: Students complete a pattern guide to help them organize their papers. A pattern guide is an organizing think sheet and represents the text structure being studied. Students follow this pattern guide to ensure that essential components are included in their written compositions.

The third step is writing. This step involves taking the information from the planning guide and generating a first draft. Students must understand that this is a *first draft* and that the process of writing is recursive. The next step is editing. This step teaches students to critique their own writing and to identify areas in which they need clarification or assistance—an important self-evaluation skill. The editing process is a two-step one involving student self-evaluation and peer editing. During the self-evaluation students reread and evaluate their own drafts, starring sections of the paper they like best and putting question marks in the margins by passages they think may be unclear. Then they think of two questions to ask their peer editors. During peer editing, students read their papers to peer editors, who then summarize the content. Next, the peer editors evaluate the papers, giving an analysis of salient features of the writing that might guide revisions or lead to improvement. For example, a peer editor might suggest that the writer add key words or reorganize the paper for clarity. These suggestions are shared with the writer. Then the peer editor and the writer brainstorm ways to improve the paper.

The final step is revising. During the revising step students decide on changes to make, using their self-evaluation sheet and peer feedback. Teacher modeling on how to insert new text or change the order of information is suggested. Another part of the revision process is a teacher-student conference, wherein changes in writing mechanics are suggested. This way, if a student is still having difficulty with clarity or errors have gone undetected through the other two evaluations, the teacher will be able to make suggestions. A final draft is then composed on a clean sheet of paper. Students can use the checklist in Figure 10.4 to ensure that all steps in the process are followed.

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What is being compared-contrasted?	
On what?	
Alike?	Different?
On what?	
Alike?	Different?
On what?	
Alike?	Different?

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FIGURE 10.2. POWER planning guide: Comparison-contrast organization form. From Englert, Raphael, and Anderson (1985).

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What is being explained?

Materials/things you need?

Setting?

First,

Next,

Third,

Then,

Last,

What are the steps?

FIGURE 10.3. POWER planning guide: Explanation organization form. From Englert, Raphael, and Anderson (1985).

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Planning

- Who will read my paper?
- Why am I writing this?
- What do I know about this topic?
- How can I group/label my facts?

Organizing

- Which pattern guide do I use (why am I writing this)?
- Have I filled in the pattern guide completely and answered the questions being asked?

Writing

- I need to write a paper using the information from the pattern guide, using complete sentences.
- Have I followed the flow or organization of the pattern guide?

EditingSelf-evaluation*Did I . . .*

- Tell what was being explained?
- Tell what things you need?
- Make the steps clear?
- Use key words?
- Make it interesting to the reader?
- Star the parts I like?
- Put question marks in the margins by things that are unclear?
- Prepare two questions for my peer editor?

Peer evaluation

- I need to summarize the paper.
- Can I pick out, and do I understand, the most important features of the paper?

(continued)

FIGURE 10.4. Example of a checklist for the POWER strategy. From Englert, Raphael, and Anderson (1985).

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Did the author . . .

- Tell what was being explained?
- Tell what things you need?
- Make the steps clear?
- Use key words?
- Make it interesting to the reader?
- Would revisions improve the quality or clarity of the paper? Where?
- I need to share suggestions with the writer.

Collaborative conference

- Have we decided on ways to make the paper better?

Revising

- Have I made the changes to improve my paper using my self-evaluation?
- Have I made changes to improve my paper using my peer's evaluation?
- Have I made the changes that we decided upon in our collaborative conference?
- Is my final draft clean and free of errors?

FIGURE 10.4. (continued)

STOP and DARE

The planning and essay writing strategies STOP and DARE were developed by De La Paz and Graham (1997) to help students write better persuasive essays. They have been used effectively with students with LD or ADHD (Jacobson & Reid, 2010). STOP and DARE contains a planning strategy, STOP, and a writing strategy, DARE. First, the planning mnemonic *STOP* is used to help students plan their persuasive essays in an effective manner. *STOP* stands for "Ssuspend judgment" (consider both sides and think of ideas for and against the topic); "Take a side" (take a position based on the ideas generated and mark the side of the argument the writer will support); "Organize my idea" (mark the strongest ideas and decide how to arrange or sequence them); and finally, "Plan more as I write" (continue to evaluate and revise). These statements help students to brainstorm ideas and organize them for an effective, persuasive essay. As we noted earlier, one problem with students who have ADHD or LD is that they leap into writing without engaging in any planning. To actually write the composition, students use DARE. This essay writing mnemonic prompts students to "Develop a topic sentence," "Add supporting ideas," "Reject possible arguments for the other side," and "End with a conclusion." DARE ensures that students will include all the necessary essay components and also serves as reminder for students to include the ideas developed in planning.

Quick Writes

The Quick Write technique has been recommended to help students write to learn (Fisher & Frey, 2008). It is not a strategy, per se; however, Quick Write can be combined effectively with the strategies discussed previously, such as POW + TREE (Mason, Benedek-Wood, & Valasa, 2009). As the name implies, the Quick Write strategy requires students to plan and write a composition in a brief period of time (i.e., 10 or 15 minutes). Quick Writes can be used at the beginning, middle, or end of instructional units to assess students' understanding and to encourage them to reflect on new knowledge, make connections between topics, summarize knowledge, or react to a topic (Mason, Benedek-Wood, et al., 2009). Quick Writes have been effectively combined with SRSD instruction with students with LD and ADHD (Mason, Kubina, & Taft, 2009). To use Quick Writes in conjunction with a writing strategy is quite straightforward (Mason, Kubina, & Taft, 2009). The strategy (e.g., POW + TREE) is first taught to mastery (i.e., students can use the strategy independently and fluently). Then the teacher discusses how it is important to be able to complete assignments or tasks quickly, and that the more students practice a task, the faster they perform it. The teacher then notes that students can use the strategy to plan and write a composition in a brief period of time. Next, the teacher models using the strategy to quickly write a composition and discusses the process with students. Students then write independently. Note that Quick Writes should not be graded and that the focus should be on getting ideas down on paper as opposed to getting all mechanics (e.g., grammar, punctuation, spelling) correct (Daniels & Bizar, 2005). Detailed lesson plans for using Quick Writes for personal narratives and informative and persuasive essays are available (see Mason et al., 2012).

Editing and Revising Strategies

With students with LD or ADHD, revising during the writing process tends to receive the least amount of time and effort; revisions are generally limited to proofreading for errors (Graham, Harris, & McKeown, 2013). The focus is on appearance (e.g., does the paper look neat?) rather than on content, and fewer than 20% of revisions made actually affect the meaning of compositions. Mechanical revisions, or transcription revisions, are certainly essential to composition; too many mechanical errors are distracting to the reader and take away from the intent of the composition. However, it is also essential for young authors to understand the purpose of writing and to be aware that revisions should not only clean up their writing, but clarify their thoughts. The revision process can be very difficult for many students with LD or ADHD. These students typically have greater difficulty than their nondisabled peers monitoring the content of their writing, and traditionally are not even encouraged to do so. Emphasis in instruction is often placed on the mechanics of writing—handwriting, grammar, and spelling—rather than on developing meaning. As a result they may be unable to detect instances where their writing is unclear, or they may even delete text that is critical to conveying important information in the composition (Graham et al., 2013). Moreover, even when a student locates a problem in text (e.g., a section that is unclear, ambiguous, or that lacks important information), there is no guarantee that he or she will be able to make

a revision that remedies the problem. Research suggests that teaching students to make effective revisions involves using problem-solving activities that encourage students to focus their attention on strategies for gathering, analyzing, and structuring information (Reynolds, Hill, Swassing, & Ward, 1988). Unfortunately, revision strategies have received much less attention than planning and organizing strategies, and there are few revision strategies for struggling writers that are supported by research (Graham et al., 2013).

SCAN

Graham and MacArthur (1988) developed the SCAN revision strategy (Table 10.2). Although this strategy was developed for use with a word processor, it can be used on hard copy (without a computer) as well. The SCAN strategy facilitates students' ability to examine written compositions in terms of clarity and cohesiveness, add material where necessary, and correct mechanical errors (Harris & Graham, 1999). The SCAN strategy consists of five steps. Step 1 is to "read your essay." Students need to read the first draft of their essay to reacquaint themselves with the substance of their paper. Step 2 is to "find the sentence that tells what you believe—is it clear?" This step encourages writers to reexamine their topic sentence and make sure it is stated clearly and accurately. Students also check the topic sentence to ensure that it reflects the desired intent. If it does not, then it needs to be revised. Step 3 is to "add two more reasons why you can believe it." This step helps the writer provide enough support to adequately defend his or her position. Step 4 is where the SCAN mnemonic comes in: Students are to "SCAN each sentence" and ask themselves: "Does it make sense?", "Is it connected to my belief?", and "Can I add more?" Then students note any errors. Each sentence is "scanned" to make sure that the essay is (1) clear—will the reader understand it?; (2) useful—does it directly support the development of the argument?; (3) complete—do more details need to be added to make the sentence better?; and (4) error free—are there any mechanical errors that need to be corrected? During Step 5, the final step, students make any necessary changes on either the computer or on a hard copy.

TABLE 10.2. SCAN Content Revision Strategy

Step 1: Read your essay.

Step 2: Find the sentence that tells what you believe—is it clear?

Step 3: Add two more reasons why you can believe it.

Step 4: SCAN each sentence and ask yourself:
 "Does it make sense?"
 "Is it connected to my belief?"
 "Can I add more?"

Step 5: Make your changes on the computer and/or on a hard copy.

Note. Based on Graham and MacArthur (1988).

IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

In this section we provide partial examples of implementation plans for each of the writing strategies previously mentioned.

Stage 1 for WWW, What = 2, How = 2: Developing and Activating Background Knowledge

Prior to teaching the strategy, it is necessary to evaluate students' background knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about writing. Formal or informal assessments can be used to determine which skills the students possess and which skills they lack; doing a task breakdown will provide the information for identifying the skills necessary to successfully complete the strategy. Table 10.3 shows a sample task breakdown for the WWW, What = 2, How = 2 strategy.

Stage 2 for POW + TREE: Discussing the Strategy

This is the first stage in initiating the strategy when it is important to stress its relevance. During an initial conference the teacher discusses the student's current performance. In order for students to be successful and able to self-regulate, they need to make a commitment to use the strategy; they need to "buy into" the value of the strategy. Thus, it is important for the teacher to stress this value. Brainstorm with the students on situations wherein using this strategy or completing a given task accurately is important. For example, the following might be appropriate brainstorming ideas in response to the question "When would it be important for you to write a persuasive opinion paper?":

- Complaining to a company
- Debating or defending a position
- Writing a letter to the editor
- Campaigning
- Trying to change someone's mind

A sample script for "selling" the strategy follows:

"The reason I wanted to talk with you is that we have been doing a lot of writing this year, and I know sometimes writing can be a difficult thing to do. Let's take a look at some of the papers that you wrote this month. You really did a nice job [point out positives; focusing on topic sentences, reasons, explanations, and endings]. However, if I try and understand what your opinion is on [topic of the paper], it is difficult for me. Earlier you had said that it would be important to make your opinion clear if you were [focus on when the student felt it would be important to write a persuasive opinion paper]. Right now your opinion is not as clear or persuasive as it could be. I have an idea about how we can make your opinion clearer in your writing. You know how you use tools in shop class to make your projects

TABLE 10.3. Sample Task Breakdown for WWW, W = 2, H = 2

Strategy	Skills	Assessment
Basic writing skills	Ability to write (print)	Given an informal assessment, the student will correctly produce letters.
	Ability to spell	Provided with a spelling test on common words in narrative prose, the student will be able to write and spell words correctly.
	Knowledge of basic grammar and punctuation	Given text with grammatical and mechanical errors, the student will be able to satisfactorily detect and correct those errors.
<u>Who</u> is the main character? <u>Who</u> else is in the story?	Knowledge of story elements	Given a story, the student will be able to identify all major story elements.
	Knowledge of main character and how to develop a main character	
	Knowledge of other characters	
<u>When</u> does the story take place?	Knowledge of setting	
<u>What</u> does the main character do?	Knowledge of action	
<u>What</u> happens when he or she tries to do it?	Knowledge of consequence of action	
<u>How</u> does the story end?	Knowledge of story endings/resolutions	
<u>How</u> does the main character feel?	Knowledge of emotions and how to present them in text	

better? I have a tool for you to use in writing that will make your papers better. The tool is a strategy called POW + TREE. The POW part of this strategy gives you power when you write, and the TREE part helps you remember all the parts to a good opinion essay."

In this stage we also introduce the strategy steps and any prompts that will be given (Figure 10.5).

Stage 3 for STOP and DARE: Modeling the Strategy

The teacher will need to use a think-aloud to demonstrate the use of the strategy. Here is an example of a think-aloud for the STOP and DARE strategy.

"Well, my teacher assigned us to write an essay about our opinion on whether teenagers should be allowed to work part-time jobs during the school year. I can do this because she taught us that STOP and DARE would help us to write a good essay. OK, what do I need to do first? I think I will write down the STOP and DARE parts. I'll use those parts to plan and organize my paper. Writing out the steps will keep me from accidentally skipping any important parts. OK, that's done, so now I'm ready to plan out my essay. The first step is 'Suspend judgment.' I need to carefully think about both sides of the issue and write down my ideas. I'll draw a line down the middle of my page and label one side *yes* and one side *no*. Then I will write my ideas for and against in the columns. That will help me keep organized. OK, that looks like a pretty good list.

"All right, what's the next step? I'll check the steps I wrote on the top of my paper. Good thing I wrote them down. OK. *T* is 'Take a side.' I know what side I think is best. Students absolutely should be allowed to work part-time jobs. Wait. I need to check the ideas I wrote down to make sure that is a good choice. OK. I think I have a bunch of good ideas for why they should be allowed to work. I'll put a star on the *yes* side to remind me that this is the side I chose. Now I need to 'Organize my idea,' so I have to pick the ideas that I think are best and decide on the order I will write about. Well, my teacher always says to use your best idea first, so I will

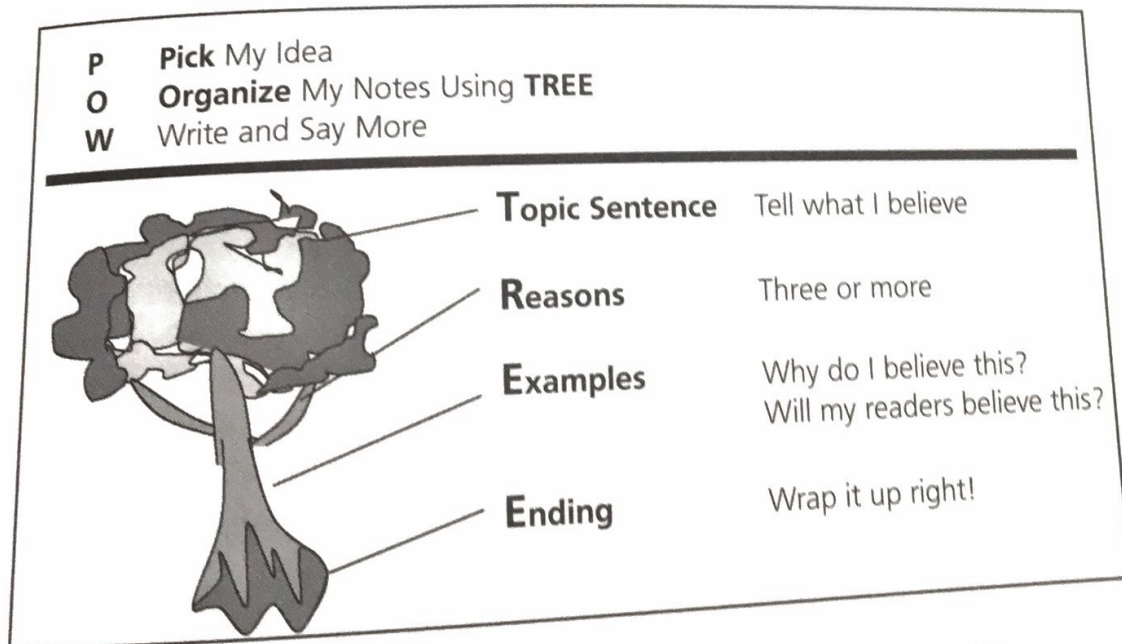


FIGURE 10.5. Example of a mnemonic chart for POW + TREE.

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pick 'A job teaches students responsibility' as my first idea. Now I can just put the others in order. I think that is a great argument. Wow. It didn't take long at all to plan this essay.

"OK, now I'm ready to start to 'Plan more as I write.' What do I do first? I remember. I 'Develop a topic sentence.' That's really important because it tells readers my position. I need to make the topic sentence really clear. I'll try to be really clear: 'I believe that students should be allowed to work part-time jobs during the school year.' That sounds pretty clear to me. Now I have to 'Add supporting ideas.' Hey, I've already developed them when I used STOP. Boy, this strategy really helps. I will go through and put each one in my essay. I need to remember to add more details to the ideas to really make a strong argument. I'm on the home stretch now. If I keep going, I'll be done in no time. I remember that my next step is to 'Reject possible arguments for the other side.' OK, I think the best argument on the other side is that working could hurt a student's schoolwork. How do I reject that? I know, I will say that students should only work on the weekends when it won't affect their schoolwork. Almost done now and I really like my essay so far. Just one more thing. I need to 'End with a conclusion' that says why students should be allowed to work part time. I did a good job!"

Stage 4 for POWER: Memorizing the Strategy

Memorizing the strategy is extremely important! We want the students to be able to focus on the task and not on trying to remember the steps of the strategy. The specific activities used to help students memorize a strategy are not nearly as important. There are many appropriate activities. The important aspect of the activities is whether or not they facilitate memorization. You will need to plan and prepare the activities and monitor their effectiveness. Here are some examples of memorization activities for the POWER strategy.

Ball Toss Game

The teacher starts off with the ball and tosses it to a student. That student starts off and says, "P—P stands for planning. We need to plan what to write, remembering the audience for the paper, the purpose, and the background information necessary to write the paper." Then that student tosses the ball to another student of their choice. That student needs to say, "O—O stands for . . .," and so on. It is important that the students not only say the letter and what the letter stands for, but also what that means. That is, they need to know what to do at each step in the strategy.

Reciting the Strategy with a Partner

Students are matched up in pairs. A student who struggles should be matched with a peer who can help with memorization of the strategy. Prior to the activity these peers are instructed on how to help their partners. The students recite the POWER mnemonic

and what they need to do at each step in the strategy. Students then take turns using the mnemonic chart to check if their partner can recite the steps of the strategy and what must be done at each step.

Making Student Checklists

Students are given a checklist for the POWER strategy (Figure 10.4). The checklist lists the steps of the strategy and what must be done at each step. Students are able to use their lists to ensure that they complete all steps of the strategy. The checklists should be laminated for multiple uses and placed on students' desks to be readily accessible.

Stage 5 for SCAN: Supporting the Strategy

Scaffolding is important in this stage. With scaffolding it is possible to gradually transfer strategy ownership from teacher to student. Students need to be given adequate time and support to master the strategy. Here are examples of how to use content, task, and material scaffolding with the SCAN strategy.

Content Scaffolding

Provide students with a simple passage. The teacher and students then go over the passage and SCAN for revisions. The teacher directs the process and the students provide answers to teacher-directed questions (i.e., "Is this a complete sentence?", "Does this make sense here?", "Are the author's feelings clear?"). Next, students are given a passage that they had written during their baseline probes. They can use the SCAN strategy to evaluate and revise their compositions. Provide a chart to ensure that every step is included.

Task Scaffolding

During collaborative practice the teacher prompts students to name the step that should be performed; then the teacher describes the step and models its use. In subsequent lessons the teacher asks students to name the steps in the SCAN strategy and describe each step, and then the teacher models the steps. Finally, the students name, describe, and model the steps of the SCAN strategy.

Material Scaffolding

Provide students with a mnemonic prompt card to be placed on their desk. Initially, this card lists the steps of the strategy and describes what to do at each step. Over time these cards provide less direction, first fading the descriptions, and eventually fading the mnemonic and steps altogether. At this point students should have reached mastery of the strategy and be able to work independently.

Stage 6 for POWER: Independent Performance

At this stage students are ready to use the strategy independently. The teacher's main task is to monitor students' performance and check on proper and consistent use of the strategy. If students deviate from the given POWER strategy, their performance should be evaluated and action taken only if performance is no longer improving.

Teachers also must evaluate whether or not the strategy is being generalized to other appropriate situations. Students do not always generalize strategies to appropriate situations; they often need to be prompted and encouraged to do so. To promote generalization, students should be encouraged to use the strategy in other content areas where they are required to write expository papers. All team teachers should be informed about the use of the strategy, the prompts, and what is required at each step. All team teachers are given a wall chart to hang up in their room as a reminder for students to use the POWER strategy when appropriate. Note that these activities can begin earlier in the instructional process.

Students keep a writing portfolio, which allows them to see the difference that the use of the strategy has made in the content of their writing. To create the portfolio:

1. Collect initial baseline probes to use in the initial conference and as part of the scaffolding process. These baseline probes also serve to illustrate the development of students' written compositions.
2. Take writing samples during strategy instruction to demonstrate student progress through the use of the POWER strategy.
3. Take a final sample, which will be included in the portfolio once it is determined that the student has reached mastery of strategy use.

Portfolios serve many purposes; the main purpose is to provide evidence of improved academic performance. These portfolios are evaluated by several people: students, teachers, parents, and administrators. After evaluating their own portfolio, students are questioned to find out whether or not they see an improvement in their writing skill and if they see the strategy as valuable to them or not. The teacher evaluates the portfolio to provide evidence of improved academic performance for grading purposes.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Writing is a complex task requiring attention to multiple processes. Negotiating and coordinating skills, knowledge, strategies, and conventions of written language can be difficult even for skilled writers. These processes are even more difficult for students with LD or ADHD. These students often lack the knowledge, skills, and strategies to be effective writers, and they do not understand that writing is purposeful. They have difficulty expressing their ideas; they focus on mechanical aspects of written communication, use unproductive strategies in their writing, and do not attend to critical writing

elements. They also have problems monitoring the writing process (e.g., planning, composing, determining whether text makes sense). And, as we discussed in the previous chapter, students with LD or ADHD often lack the prerequisite skills necessary to effective writers, so it is also important to attend closely to these skills, particularly transcription skills and spelling.

Despite the difficulties inherent in the writing process, the evidence is clear that, through strategy instruction, students with LD or ADHD can be taught to attend to the critical elements of writing—planning, organizing, and revising—which can provide them with the knowledge, skills, and strategies they need to become effective writers.