

Teaching Writing to Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

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The power of writing

- Everything read must first be written
- Communicating across space and time
- Recording information and providing a permanent record
- Allowing for reflection on what has been written
- Works in concert with:
 - other representation systems (e.g., drawings, graphs)
 - new technologies (e.g., phones)



Writing is harder than reading

- Most demanding, complex cognitive activity that learners typically undertake (Singer & Bashir, 2004)
- When I read the English I only need to figure out what is already there, when I write I have to make the English (deaf student writer)
- Teaching writing is harder than teaching reading (Connie)



Writing is a demanding activity

You can't write something you can't "say"

When you write you are dictating to yourself

You need to communicate:

- When your interlocuter is absent
- Without benefit of auditory, visual/gestural cues
- Across space and time



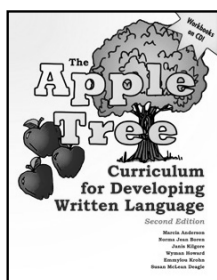
Deaf writers

Historically deaf writers did not demonstrate age-appropriate performance (Paul, 2001; Mayer, Challenges with most aspects of learning to write

- Compositional structure
- Coherence
- Syntax and grammar
- Spelling



Teaching writing



What are examples of programs we have used?

- Ten basic language structures taught:
- e.g., $N1 + V(\text{be}) + \text{Adjective}$
- $N1 + V(\text{be}) + \text{Where}$
- $N1 + V(\text{be}) + N1$
- $N1 + V$
- $N1 + V + \text{Where}$



Plan for our webinar

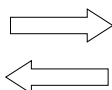
Consider a model for teaching writing that is informed by what we know about hearing learners

- Identify effective strategies and resources
- Not an in-depth focus on the emergent writer and on learning to spell
- **Need to assume a threshold level of competence in the language to be written**



The demands of writing (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987)

Content Space *What do I mean? (Top down)*
World/prior knowledge, concepts, ideas



Rhetorical Space *How do I say it? (Bottom up)*
Phonology, morphology, syntax, genre, register

Not enough to have the content knowledge
Writers need to organize the content knowledge in the language to be written



Writing is a process

Applies to all writers if they are to be effective.
It is recursive not linear.

The process involves:

- planning
- drafting or generating
- revising and editing
- putting the writing to use



Writers Workshop:
A Model for Teaching Writing

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Writers workshop

Teaching model that views writing as a process not an event

- values process not only product
- allows for revision and editing
- emphasizes communicating for authentic purposes
- balances focus on meaning and form
- allows students to be at various stages of the writing process at one time
- works individually, in groups, in a range of settings, across the age range

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Elements of writers workshop

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Writers workshop example

Integrated grade 1-2 classroom

- Two teachers, 30 hearing and 5-7 deaf students
- Daily for 90 minutes, 4 days a week

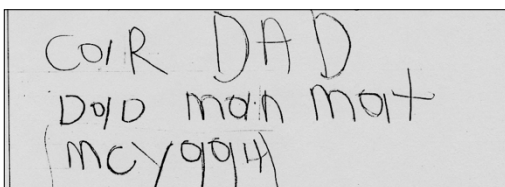
Daily Schedule

- Status of the Class -> Sign Up Sheets
- Independent Writing Time -> Conferencing
- Sharing Time -> Author's Chair
- Mini-Lessons

Ongoing publishing of student work

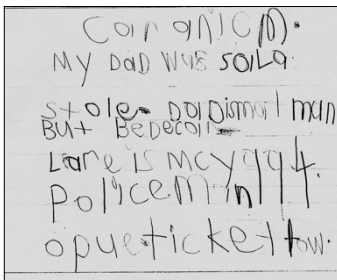


Teacher conference – 1st draft

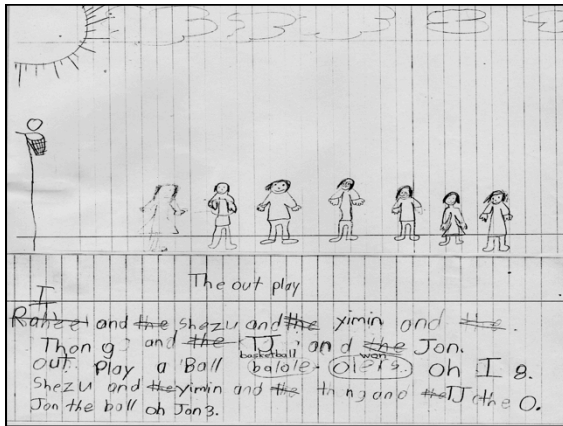


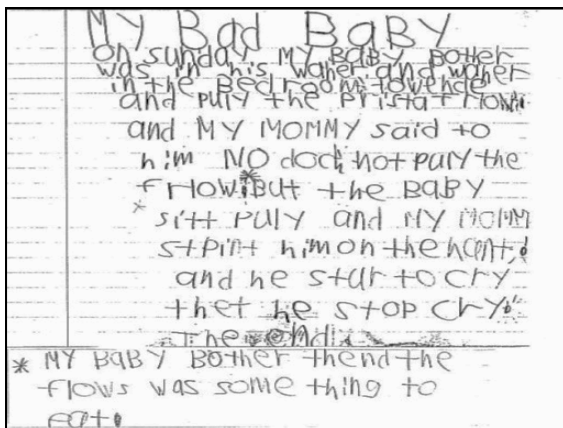
Dad was in the car. Dad was mad at the man. The licence was MCY 994.

Teacher conference – 2nd draft



My Dad was near the store. Dad was mad at the man because he smashed the car. The licence number is MCY 994. The policeman gave the man two tickets.





Description of writers workshop

Ontario Ministry of Education - eworkshops & exemplars
<http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/core.cfm>

Reading Rockets

(includes a video presentation of writer's workshop – just use the search term “writing” and the relevant areas of the site will come up)
<http://www.readingrockets.org/>



Implementing Writers Workshop



Implementation

1. Adequate time must be devoted to writing instruction in the school day – at least 90 minutes/week
2. Establish routines for how the writing class is managed so that students know what is expected of them.
3. Address all aspects of the writing curriculum within the process writing approach.
4. Use written language for authentic purposes.



Purposeful use of written language

The more they use language the more they learn about the forms of language - the words, the patterns - that will help them to accomplish their purposes. When we think about children learning language, we can apply the simple principle: form follows function.

Pinnell, G.S. (1985). Ways to look at the functions of children's language. In A. Jaggar & M.T/ Smith (Eds.), *Observing the language learner* (pp. 57-72). Newark: IRA.



Functions of written language

Instrumental (I want)	Request, cajole, persuade
Regulatory (Do as I say)	Direct behaviour
Interactional (Me and you)	Disagree, promise, criticize, compliment
Personal (I feel)	Complain, justify, express emotions
Imaginative (Let's pretend)	Tell stories, role play
Heuristic (Tell me why)	Request clarification predict, probe
Informative (I've got something to tell you)	Describe, compare, discuss, suggest

Functions into practice

Consider Halliday's Functions of Written Language.

Consider the types of writing (genres) that could be introduced/taught to address each of these functions for:

- beginning/novice writers
- developing/more advanced writers

What connections could you make to other subject areas and the mainstream curriculum?



Instrumental (I want)	Request, cajole, persuade	Lists, Memos
Regulatory (Do as I say)	Direct behaviour	Posters, Instructions, Signs, Advertisements
Interactional (Me and you)	Disagree, promise, criticize, compliment	E-mail, Letters, Notes, Texts
Personal (I feel)	Complain, justify, express emotions	Letters, Cards, Journals, Diaries
Imaginative (Let's pretend)	Tell stories, role play	Poetry, Plays, Stories
Heuristic (Tell me why)	Request clarification predict, probe	Essays, Experiments, Response Papers
Informative (I've got something to tell you)	Describe, compare, discuss, suggest	Biographies, Summaries, Retells

Resources

Moog Center

(monthly calendar includes
Ideas for using writing for
authentic purposes)

<http://www.moogcenter.org/MonthlyLanguageCalendar.aspx>



Implementation

5. Be thoughtful about the choice of topic.
6. Integrate writing done in other subject areas into the writing classroom.
7. Create opportunities for sharing and publishing work and reading writing aloud.
8. Ensure a balance between the writing of narrative and expository texts.



Narrative texts

Start with narratives

- Familiar content
- Less dependent on world knowledge
- Simpler structure
- Higher frequency vocabulary
- Natural transition from spoken to written language



Expository texts

Introduce expository text in the early years

- Logical-causal arguments are made which are more difficult to construct than narratives
- More dependent on world knowledge
- Less familiar language and vocabulary
- Typical of most texts beyond the primary level
- Bulk of texts that adults use in work or daily life



Implementation

9. Provide explicit modelling at all stages of the process.
10. Use mini-lessons for explicit teaching.



Planning the Writing: Strategies



Brainstorming topics

Discuss potential topics individually or as a group
Make a list of key points, ideas, reflections and vocabulary
These can be documented:

- writer's notebooks
- word walls
- semantic web
- conceptual maps



Use graphic organizers

Provide a scaffold for organizing the content

- Can be used for narrative or expository text
- Offers a visual framework for various genre
- Can be used to create or analyze a written text



Resources

Graphic Organizers

[http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/
graphic_organizers.htm](http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/graphic_organizers.htm)

<http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

Create Teaching Resources

(presents ideas for how to use semantic webs, conceptual maps etc.)

<http://www.inspiration.com/>



Generating the Text: Strategies



Reading aloud

Reading aloud is part of the writing program
 Texts read are a model for those to be written
 Exposure to a range of genres - fiction and non-fiction

- Fairytales, Fables
- Poems
- Essays
- Summaries
- Book Reports
- Science Experiments



Engage in literate discourse

Introduce language/vocabulary that appears in text
 Ask students to orally:

- Retell with supporting details
- Provide explanations
- Give descriptions
- Make comparisons
- Give rationales
- Support a claim with evidence



Dictation

Draws the writer's attention to the connection between face to face language and the print

- Student dictates - teacher scribes
- Teacher and student alternate dictating and scribing
- Teacher dictates - student scribes
- Student dictates - student scribes

Can not dictate in ASL and scribe in English -> this is translation not dictation



Cloze activities

Oral/Sign Cloze – Generate a sentence and student supplies the missing word

Print Cloze – filling in missing words

- Supply a line for each letter
- Relate blank to length of word
- Supply first letter or other print clue
- Identify part of speech, function etc.

Strategy - when the writer doesn't know a word - leave a blank in his text



Providing text for a wordless book

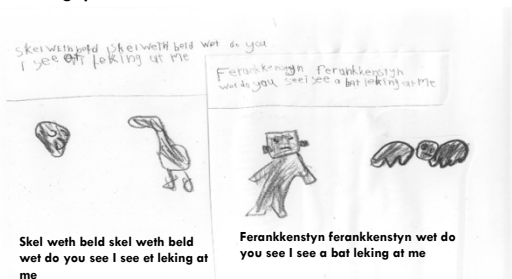
How is this 6 year old child using oral language as the route to literacy?

What do you notice about her use of vocabulary, syntax, expression? What is her sense of the genre?

One Frog Too Many



Using pattern books as a model



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Encoding (spelling) skills

The teaching of code-related skills is relatively easy compared with the broader more complex set of language skills (Dickinson et al., 2010)

Not possible to learn to write by memorizing sight words

- Appropriate to teach approximately 100 common, high frequency English words
- Recognized automatically & phonics rules often do not apply
- Sight word lists are often more extensive (about 250)

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Encourage invented spelling

- Kindergarten children's ability to engage in invented spelling was the strongest and most consistent predictor of their progress in a phonological training curriculum (Torgeson & Davis, 1996)
- "Despite concerns that invented spelling might interfere with development of conventional spelling and reading [and writing] skills, the effects seem to be just the opposite: Good invented spelling is associated with skill in learning to read [and write]" (Pressley, 2006)

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Visual Phonics: See the Sound



Works in conjunction with other interventions
 Effective for developing encoding skills
 Can play a role in invented spelling
 Evidence of positive benefits for deaf learners



Role for fingerspelling?

- Does not develop phoneme-grapheme correspondence
- One to one match with English graphemes not phonemes
 - Not supportive of invented spelling
 - Not supportive of developing the alphabetic principle
 - Limited role in developing encoding skills



Revising the Text: Strategies



Reading writing aloud

To edit for meaning and/or form

- Teacher reads the text aloud to the student
- Student reads the text aloud to the teacher, peer or to the class
- Student reads text aloud and records (audio and/or video) and listens

Conferencing and Author's Chair provide opportunities for reading aloud to inform revising



Teaching rules

Some can be easily taught (e.g. plural "s", period at the end of a sentence)

- Can be more helpful for older learners
- Others are difficult to teach (e.g. use of articles)
- Can be difficult to remember
- Not easy to apply the rule "in use"



Teaching rules?

Many systems can be described by rules, but that is not the same thing as using the rules to carry out a process.

Markman, A. & Dietrich, E. (1998). In defense of representation as mediation. *Psychology* 98 (48).



Use metalanguage

Introduce the language to talk about the text and about writing the text

- About the product - words like letter, word, sentence, paragraph, noun, adjective, present tense verb etc.
- About the process - brainstorming, topics, first draft, revising, editing, publishing etc.



References as resources

Charts/Word lists

Words walls

Personal dictionaries

Picture dictionaries

•Bordman, M & Womeldorf, A. (1999). Gallaudet Writer's Handbook. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press.



Sample Resources

Read, Write, Think

(includes many resources for teaching writing organized by grade level)

<http://www.readwritethink.org/>

Foundations for Literacy (Canadian Language & Literacy Research Network)

(includes a section on teaching writing)

<http://eyeonkids.ca/docs/files/readwritekit08.pdf>