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Integrated Writing Instruction

Writing [1]

Students with writing disabilities typically find the act of writing to be both difficult and unrewarding. These students' resulting lack of motivation to write can lock them into a downward spiral, in which they avoid most writing tasks and fail to develop those writing skills in which they are deficient. Indeed, for some students, a diagnosed writing disability may not be neurologically based but instead can be explained by the student's simple lack of opportunities to practice and build competent writing skills.

MacArthur and colleagues (MacArthur, Graham, & Schwartz, 1993) have developed an integrated approach to classroom writing instruction designed to accommodate the special needs of disabled writers, as well as those of their non-disabled peers. In this instructional approach, the student writes about authentic topics that have a 'real-world' purpose and relevance. Student writing is regularly shared with classmates and the instructor, with these audiences creating a sustaining social context to motivate and support the writer. Students receive instruction and feedback in an interactive manner, presented both in lecture format and through writing conferences with classmates. Technology (particularly computer word processing) is harnessed to help the writing disabled student to be more productive and to make use of software writing tools to extend his or her own capabilities in written expression.

The instructor follows a uniform daily instructional framework for writing instruction. First, the instructor checks in with students about the status of their current writing projects, then teaches a mini-lesson, next allows the group time to write and to conference with peers and the teacher, and finally arranges for the group to share or publish their work for a larger audience.

Status-checking

At the start of the writing session, the instructor quickly goes around the room, asking each student what writing goal(s) he or she plans to accomplish that day. The instructor records these responses for all to see.

Mini-Lesson.

The instructor teaches a mini-lesson relevant to the writing process. Mini-lessons are a useful means to present explicit writing strategies (e.g., an outline for drafting an opinion

essay), as well as a forum for reviewing the conventions of writing. Mini-lessons should be kept short (e.g., 5-10 minutes) to hold the attention of the class.

Student Writing

During the session, substantial time is set aside for students to write. Their writing assignment might be one handed out by the instructor that day or part of a longer composition (e.g., story, extended essay) that the student is writing and editing across multiple days. When possible, student writers are encouraged use computers as aids in composing and editing their work. (Before students can compose efficiently on computers, of course, they must have been trained in keyboarding and use of word-processing software).

Peer & Teacher Conferences.

Writers need timely, gentle, focused feedback from readers of their work in order to improve their compositions. At the end of the daily writing block, the student may sit with a classmate to review each other's work, using a structured peer editing strategy. During this discussion time, the teacher also holds brief individual conferences with students to review their work, have students evaluate how successfully they completed their writing goals for the day, and hear writers' thoughts about how they might plan to further develop a writing assignment.

Group Sharing or Publishing.

At the end of each session, writing produced that day is shared with the whole class. Students might volunteer to read passages aloud from their compositions. Another method of sharing might be for the students to post their work on the classroom wall or bulletin board for everyone to read and respond to. Periodically, polished student work might be displayed in a public area of the school for all to read, published in an anthology of school writings, read aloud at school assemblies, or published on the Internet.

References

- MacArthur, C., Graham, S., & Schwarz, S. (1993). Integrating strategy instruction and word processing into a process approach to writing instruction. *School Psychology Review*, 22, 671-681).

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Spelling: Repeated Review of Spelling Words with Shared Rime

Writing (1)

DESCRIPTION: The student practices the reading and spelling of words from word families that have similar pronunciation and shared spelling patterns (rimes) (adapted from Conrad, 2008).

NOTE: In a single-syllable word, the onset consists of the consonant(s) appearing at the front of the word, while the rime is the part of the word made up of its vowel and any consonants that follow the vowel. For example, in the word *black*, the onset is **bl-** and the rime is **-ack**.

GROUP SIZE: Small group, individual student

TIME: About 15 minutes per session

MATERIALS:

- Flash-cards of spelling words (20 per session) in groupings of five words each from word-families with different rimes
- *Student Sheet: Spelling Words with Shared Rime* (attached)
- *Recording Sheet: Repeated Review of Spelling Words with Shared Rime* (attached)

PREPARATION: In advance of each session of this reading/spelling intervention, the teacher:

- selects four single-syllable word families with shared rime. **NOTE:** A list of word families appropriate for this intervention appears on the attached *Recording Sheet: Repeated Review of Spelling Words with Shared Rime*. While the list is extensive, the

teacher may want to choose only high-frequency word families for use in this intervention.

- generates a list of up to five words from each of the four selected word-families to review with the student (e.g., **-ack**: pack, black, rack, tack, sack / **-ill**: pill, sill, mill, till, bill), resulting in a total word-list of 20 items for the day's session. NOTE: Educators can access a free wordlist generator to create wordlists with shared rime at: <http://www.wordlistgenerator.net> [2]. Also, the attached *Recording Sheet: Repeated Review of Spelling Words with Shared Rime* is a convenient form that the teacher can use to keep an ongoing record of the words being used in the intervention.
- makes 4 in. x 6 in. flash-cards of the selected spelling words. One word is written on each flash-card, with the onset (initial consonant(s)) of the word) written in black ink and the rime of the word written in red ink.

INTERVENTION STEPS: The Repeated Review of Spelling Words with Shared Rime intervention has both a reading and spelling component:

1. **Have the Student Read the Words Aloud.** During the reading component of the intervention session, the teacher ensures that the flash-cards of the same word-family (shared rime) are grouped together. The teacher shows the student each flash-card for 5 seconds and asks the student to read it aloud. If the student reads the word correctly, the teacher acknowledges the response (e.g., 'Good' or 'Right') and moves to the next card. If the student misreads the card or hesitates for 5 seconds or longer, the teacher says the correct word and has the student say the correct word, then moves to the next card. The teacher continues until the student has attempted all flash-cards once.
2. **Have the Student Spell the Words.** During the writing component of the intervention session, the teacher again ensures that the flash-cards of the same word-family (shared rime) are grouped together. For each word, the teacher reads the word from the flash-card but does not show the card to the student. The student is directed to write the word. Then the teacher immediately shows the student the correct model on the flash-card and asks the student to state whether he or she spelled the word correctly. If the student's spelling is correct, the teacher moves to the next spelling word.

However, if the student's spelling is incorrect, the student is directed to cross out the incorrect spelling and copy the correct word from the flash-card into the appropriate 'Self-Correction' blank. The teacher then moves to the next spelling word. The process continues until the student has attempted all 20 spelling words. NOTE: The attached *Student Sheet: Spelling Words with Shared Rime* is conveniently formatted for this spelling-review activity.

3. **Record Correct Student Responses.** While conducting this intervention, the teacher records each word that the student reads and spells correctly and notes the date of that correct response. NOTE: The teacher can use the attached *Recording Sheet: Repeated Review of Spelling Words with Shared Rime* to record correct responses.
4. **Continue With the Current List Until Mastery.** The teacher continues using the current wordlist in successive sessions until the student can respond without error on both the reading and spelling task for all 20 words on the list. The teacher then selects new word families and generates a new wordlist.

Attachments

- [Student Sheet: Spelling Words with Shared Rime](#) [3]
- [Recording Sheet: Repeated Review of Spelling Words with Shared Rime](#) [4]

References

- Conrad, N. J. (2008). From reading to spelling and spelling to reading: Transfer goes both ways. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100, 869-878.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.interventioncentral.org/academic-interventions/writing>

[2] <http://www.wordlistgenerator.net>

[3] http://www.interventioncentral.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pdfs_interventions/spelling_words_w_shared_rime_student_sheet.pdf

[4] http://www.interventioncentral.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pdfs_interventions/spelling_words_w_shared_rime_teacher_log.pdf



Student Sheet: Spelling Words with Shared Rime (Conrad, 2008)

Student: _____ Date: _____

Directions: The student writes and reviews a list of words representing word-families with a shared rime. It is recommended that blocks of at least 5 words be selected from the same word family for review. Therefore, this student form has space to accommodate words from up to 2 different rime families (e.g., **-ack:** pack, black, rack, tack, sack / **-ill:** pill, sill, mill, till, bill).

The spelling part of this intervention session follows this format: (1) The tutor states each word aloud from a flash-card without showing the card to the student; (2) the student writes the word into the appropriate blank under the 'Spelling Words' column; (3) the tutor shows the student the correctly spelled word on the flash-card; (4) if the student makes an error, he/she uses the flash-card as a model to copy the correct spelling into the appropriate blank under the 'Self-Correction' column.

Correct	Spelling Words	Self-Correction
_Y_N	1. _____	1. _____
_Y_N	2. _____	2. _____
_Y_N	3. _____	3. _____
_Y_N	4. _____	4. _____
_Y_N	5. _____	5. _____
_Y_N	6. _____	6. _____
_Y_N	7. _____	7. _____
_Y_N	8. _____	8. _____
_Y_N	9. _____	9. _____
_Y_N	10. _____	10. _____



Recording Sheet: Repeated Review of Spelling Words with Shared Rime (Conrad, 2008)

Student: _____ Teacher/Interventionist: _____ Classroom/Grade: _____

Directions: Use this form to organize by word family the words used in the intervention, to log the date when a word family is first presented, and to log the date(s) when each word is mastered in (a) the reading activity and (b) the spelling activity.

Word Family: _____ Date When First Introduced: ___ / ___ / ___			Word Families/Rime <input type="checkbox"/> -ack (e.g., pack, lack) <input type="checkbox"/> -ail (e.g., nail, pail) <input type="checkbox"/> -ain (e.g., pain, gain) <input type="checkbox"/> -ake (e.g., rake, cake) <input type="checkbox"/> -ale (e.g., sale, bale) <input type="checkbox"/> -ame (e.g., fame, tame) <input type="checkbox"/> -ank (e.g., tank, rank) <input type="checkbox"/> -ash (e.g., lash, hash) <input type="checkbox"/> -ate (e.g., mate, plate) <input type="checkbox"/> -aw (e.g., saw, paw) <input type="checkbox"/> -ay (e.g., say, day) <input type="checkbox"/> -eed (e.g., seed, reed) <input type="checkbox"/> -ell (e.g., tell, bell) <input type="checkbox"/> -est (e.g., best, rest) <input type="checkbox"/> -ew (e.g., flew, dew) <input type="checkbox"/> -ide (e.g., ride, side) <input type="checkbox"/> -ick (e.g., lick, pick) <input type="checkbox"/> -ight (e.g., fight, tight) <input type="checkbox"/> -ill (e.g., pill, sill) <input type="checkbox"/> -ine (e.g., line, mine) <input type="checkbox"/> -ing (e.g., sing, ring) <input type="checkbox"/> -ink (e.g., link, mink) <input type="checkbox"/> -ock (e.g., sock, rock) <input type="checkbox"/> -oke (e.g., poke, choke) <input type="checkbox"/> -ook (e.g., book, look) <input type="checkbox"/> -ore (e.g., sore, more) <input type="checkbox"/> -uck (e.g., luck, muck) <input type="checkbox"/> -ump (e.g., bump, hump) <input type="checkbox"/> -unk (e.g., sunk, bunk)
1. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
2. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
3. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
4. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
5. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
Word Family: _____ Date When First Introduced: ___ / ___ / ___			
1. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
2. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
3. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
4. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
5. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
Word Family: _____ Date When First Introduced: ___ / ___ / ___			
1. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
2. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
3. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
4. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	
5. _____	Reading Mastered: DATE: _____	Spelled Mastered: DATE: _____	



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Spelling: Cover-Copy-Compare

Writing [1]

DESCRIPTION: In this intervention to promote acquisition of spelling words, the student is given a spelling sheet with the target words correctly spelled. The student looks at each correctly spelled word, covers the word briefly and copies it from memory, then compares the copied word to the original correct model (Skinner, McLaughlin & Logan, 1997).

GROUP SIZE: Whole class, small group, individual student

TIME: Variable up to 15 minutes per session

MATERIALS:

- *Worksheet: Cover-Copy-Compare* (attached)
- *Spelling Log: Mastered Words* (attached)

INTERVENTION STEPS: Here are the steps of Cover-Copy-Compare for spelling:

1. **[Teacher] Create a Cover-Copy-Compare Spelling Sheet.** The teacher selects up to 10 spelling words for the student to work on during the session and writes those words as correct models into the left column ('Spelling Words') of the *Worksheet: Cover-Copy-Compare* (attached). The teacher then pre-folds the spelling sheet using as a guide the vertical dashed line ('fold line') bisecting the left side of the student worksheet.
2. **[Student] Use the Cover-Copy-Compare Procedures.** During the Cover-Copy-Compare intervention, the student follows these self-directed steps for each spelling word:

STEP 1: Look at the correctly spelled target word that appears in the left column of the sheet.

STEP 2: Fold the left side of the page over at the pre-folded vertical crease to hide the correct model ('Cover').

STEP 3: Spell the word from memory, writing it in the first response blank under the 'Student Response' section of the spelling sheet ('Copy').

STEP 4: Uncover the correct model and compare it to the student response ('Compare').

If the student spelling is CORRECT, move to the next word on the list and repeat these procedures.

If the student spelling is INCORRECT, draw a line through the incorrect response, study the correct model again, cover the model, copy the word from memory into the second response blank under the 'Student Response' section of the spelling sheet, and again check the correctness of its spelling.

Continue until all words on the spelling list have been spelled and checked against the correct models.

3. **[Teacher] Log Spelling Words Mastered by Student.** The teacher should select an objective standard for judging that the student using Cover-Copy-Compare has 'mastered' a spelling word (e.g., when the student is able to copy a specific word from memory without error on three successive occasions). The teacher can then apply this standard for mastery to identify and log spelling words in each session, using the *Spelling Log: Mastered Words* sheet (attached).

Attachments

- [Worksheet: Cover-Copy-Compare](#) [2]
- [Spelling Log: Mastered Words](#) [3]

References

- Skinner, C. H., McLaughlin, T. F., & Logan, P. (1997). Cover, copy, and compare: A self-managed academic intervention effective across skills, students, and settings. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 7*, 295-306.

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[2] http://www.interventioncentral.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pdfs_interventions/spelling_cover_copy_compare_student_worksheet.pdf

[3] http://www.interventioncentral.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pdfs_interventions/spelling_self_correct_verbal_cue_cumulative_mastery_log.pdf



Worksheet: Cover-Copy-Compare Student: _____ Date: _____

Spelling Words	Student Response
1.	1a.
	1b.
2.	2a.
	2b.
3.	3a.
	3b.
4.	4a.
	4b.
5.	5a.
	5b.
6.	6a.
	6b.
7.	7a.
	7b.
8.	8a.
	8b.
9.	9a.
	9b.
10.	10a.
	10b.

Fold Line



Spelling Log: Mastered Words

Student: _____ School Yr: _____ Classroom/Course: _____

Spelling Cumulative Mastery Log: During the spelling intervention, log each mastered word below with date of mastery.

Word 1: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 21: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 2: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 22: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 3: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 23: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 4: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 24: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 5: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 25: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 6: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 26: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 7: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 27: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 8: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 28: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 9: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 29: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 10: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 30: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 11: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 31: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 12: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 32: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 13: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 33: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 14: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 34: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 15: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 35: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 16: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 36: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 17: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 37: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 18: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 38: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 19: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 39: _____ Date: __/__/__
Word 20: _____ Date: __/__/__	Word 40: _____ Date: __/__/__



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Spelling: Self-Correction with Verbal Cues

Writing [1]

DESCRIPTION: The student takes a brief spelling pre-test, follows a self-guided process to check and correct spelling errors using verbal cues, and then takes a spelling post-test (adapted from Gettinger, 1985).

GROUP SIZE: Whole class, small group, individual student

TIME: About 15 minutes per session

MATERIALS:

- Flash-cards of spelling words (five per session)
- Pen with colored ink (e.g., green, red)
- *Spelling Sheet: Self-Correction with Verbal Cues* (attached)
- *Spelling Self-Correction with Verbal Cues: Student Reminder Checklist* (attached)
- [Optional] *Spelling: Self-Correction with Verbal Cues: Recording Form* (attached)
- [Optional] *Spelling Log: Mastered Words* (attached).

INTERVENTION STEPS: The spelling intervention Self-Correction follows these steps:

1. **[Teacher] Train the Student.** The teacher trains the student to use the spelling self-correction with verbal cues procedures (described below) in an introductory session. The student then completes 1-3 practice spelling tests with easy words and uses the spelling intervention procedures under the teacher's supervision.
2. **[Teacher] Give the Spelling Pre-Test.** At the start of each session, the teacher selects five spelling words and administers them to the student as a pre-test. The student writes the words into the 'Pre-Test' section of the *Spelling Sheet: Self-Correction with Verbal Cues*.
3. **[Student] Check Work and Correct Error Spelling Words.** After finishing the spelling pre-test, the student is given a set of flash-cards with the correct spelling words as well as a copy of the *Student Reminder Checklist*.

The student uses the spelling flash-cards to check his or her work, checking off each word spelled correctly.

For each word marked as INCORRECT, the student:

STEP 1: Studies and says the name of the correct word as it appears on the flash-card.

STEP 2: Circles with colored pen those letters in the error word that are incorrect.

STEP 3: Turns the flash-card over to hide the correct word.

STEP 4: Copies the correct word from memory into the first of the two 'Student Self-Correction' blanks provided on the *Spelling Sheet: Self-Correction with Verbal Cues*.

STEP 5: Compares the word just copied from memory to the word on the flash-card to make sure the answer is correct.

STEP 6: Circles with colored pen those letters within the correctly written word that were originally in error but have now been fixed.

STEP 7: Looks at the letters circled in colored pen both in the original error word and in the corrected spelling of the same word and tells self, "This is the part of the word that I need to remember".

STEP 8: Repeats steps 1-7 above, using the second of the two 'Student Self-Correction' blanks provided.

4. **[Teacher] Give the Spelling Post-Test.** After the student has completed the error correction portion of the session, the teacher has the student put the spelling flash-cards aside temporarily and re-administers the five spelling words as a post-test. Before taking the post-test, the student folds the *Spelling Sheet: Self-Correction with Verbal Cues* at the dotted line to hide the pre-test words and writes the words of the re-administered test into the 'Post-Test' section of the form. The student then uses the flash-cards to score the post-test.
5. **[Teacher-Optional] Log the Student's Daily Spelling Performance.** The teacher can track the student's daily pre-test and post-test performance using the attached *Spelling: Self-Correction with Verbal Cues: Recording Form*. The teacher can also track actual spelling words acquired by the student, using the attached *Spelling Log: Mastered Words* form. NOTE: The teacher may instead assign the student responsibility for logging his or her daily spelling performance.

Attachments

- [*Spelling Sheet: Self-Correction with Verbal Cues*](#) ^[2]
- [*Spelling Self-Correction with Verbal Cues: Student Reminder Checklist*](#) ^[3]
- [*\[Optional\] Spelling: Self-Correction with Verbal Cues: Recording Form*](#) ^[4]
- [*\[Optional\] Spelling Log: Mastered Words*](#) ^[5]

References

- Gettinger, M. (1985). Effects of teacher-directed versus student-directed instruction and cues versus no cues for improving spelling performance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 18, 167-171.

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[5] http://www.interventioncentral.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pdfs_interventions/spelling_self_correct_verbal_cue_cumulative_mastery_log.pdf



Spelling Sheet: Student Self-Correction with Verbal Cues (Gettinger, 1985)

Student: _____ Date: _____

Directions: In the pre-test, the student has a list of up to 5 spelling words read aloud and writes them into the 'Pre-Test' column. The student is then given flash-cards with the correct spelling words. The student checks his/her work, using the steps spelled out in the Student Reminder Checklist. Finally, the student folds the sheet at the dotted line, takes a post-test of the same words (without access to flashcards), and again checks his/her work.

Correct	Pre-Test	Student Self-Correction	
_Y_N	1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
_Y_N	2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
_Y_N	3. _____	3. _____	3. _____
_Y_N	4. _____	4. _____	4. _____
_Y_N	5. _____	5. _____	5. _____

Correct	Post-Test
_Y_N	1. _____
_Y_N	2. _____
_Y_N	3. _____
_Y_N	4. _____
_Y_N	5. _____

Reference

Gettinger, M. (1985). Effects of teacher-directed versus student-directed instruction and cues versus no cues for improving spelling performance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 18*, 167-171.



Spelling Self-Correction with Verbal Cues: Student Reminder Checklist

After finishing my spelling pre-test, did I:

- Use the spelling flash-cards to check my work, checking off each of my words that I spelled correctly?

For each word I marked as INCORRECT, did I:

- STEP 1: Study and say the name of the correct word as it appeared on the flash-card?
- STEP 2: Circle with colored pen those letters in my error word that were incorrect?
- STEP 3: Turn the flash-card over to hide the correct word?
- STEP 4: Copy the correct word from memory into the first of the two 'Student Self-Correction' blanks provided?
- STEP 5: Compare my word just copied from memory to the word on the flash-card to make sure that my answer was correct?
- STEP 6: Circle with colored pen those letters within my correctly written word that were originally wrong but now have been fixed?
- STEP 7: Look at the letters circled in colored pen both in my error word and in my corrected spelling of the same word and told myself, "*This is the part of the word that I need to remember*"?
- STEP 8: Repeat steps 1-7 above, using the second of the two 'Student Self-Correction' blanks provided?



Sentence Combining: Teaching Rules of Sentence Structure by Doing

Students with poor writing skills often write sentences that lack 'syntactic maturity' (Robinson & Howell, 2008). That is, these writers' sentences often follow a simple, stereotyped format. In public schools, grammar skills have traditionally been taught in isolation to give students the advanced writing knowledge required to master a diverse range of sentence structures. However, isolated grammar instruction appears to have little or no positive impact in helping poor writers become better writers (Graham & Perin, 2007). A promising alternative is to use sentence combining (Graham & Perin, 2007; Strong, 1986). In this approach, students are presented with kernel sentences and given explicit instruction in how to weld these kernel sentences into more diverse sentence types either by using connecting words to combine multiple sentences into one or by isolating key information from an otherwise superfluous sentence and embedding that important information into the base sentence.

In a simple demonstration of sentence combining, a student may generate these two sentences in her composition on the American Revolution: *The American army had few supplies in the winter of 1776. The American army had few trained military leaders.*

The instructor might meet with the student and have the student recopy the two sentences in this format:

The American army had few supplies in the winter of 1776.
The American army had few trained military leaders. (and)

The student would be encouraged to combine the two shorter sentences into a more comprehensive sentence by using the connecting word (coordinating conjunction) 'and' to combine objects: *The American army had few supplies and few trained military leaders in the winter of 1776.*

Formatting Sentence Combining Examples

These simple formatting conventions are used in sentence-combining exercises (Saddler, 2005; Strong, 1986):

- In each example, the base clause (sentence) appears first. Any sentence(s) to be combined or embedded with the base clause appear below that base clause.

Example: **Base clause:** The dog ran after the bus.
Sentence to be embedded: The dog is yellow.
Student-generated solution: *The yellow dog ran after the bus.*

- 'Connecting words' to be used as a sentence-combining tool appear in parentheses at the end of a sentence that is to be combined with the base clause.

Example: **Base clause:** The car stalled.
Sentence to be combined: The car ran out of gas. (because)
Student-generated solution: *The car stalled because it ran out of gas.*



- The element(s) of any sentence to be embedded in the base clause are underlined.

Example: **Base clause:** The economic forecast resulted in strong stock market gains.

Sentence to be embedded: The economic forecast was upbeat.

Student-generated solution: *The upbeat economic forecast resulted in strong stock market gains.*

Using Sentence Combining in Instruction

Teachers who use sentence combining in their writing instruction should follow a direct-instruction approach (Saddler, 2005). The instructor fosters a learning atmosphere that encourages students to take risks when participating in sentence-combining activities. When first introducing sentence-combining to the class, the instructor explains that using varied sentence structures helps writers to better convey meaning. The instructor tells students that there are often multiple correct ways to combine sentences. The instructor completes several sentence-combining examples in front of the group, using a think-aloud approach to show his or her thinking process in successfully combining sentences. Students should then complete sentence-combining examples in pairs or groups, with the instructor circulating through the class to check for student understanding. Eventually, students work independently on sentence combining tasks to demonstrate mastery. They may then be asked to look in their own writing for examples in which they could combine sentences to improve

A listing of types and examples of sentence-combining appears below in Table 1. When creating lessons on sentence combining, instructors should review the potential types of sentence-combining in Table 1 and decide the order in which those types might be presented to their class.

Type of Sentence	Sentence Combining Example
<p>Multiple (Compound) Sentence Subjects or Objects:</p> <p>Two or more subjects can be combined with a conjunction (e.g., <i>or</i>, <i>and</i>).</p> <p>Two or more direct or indirect objects can be combined with a conjunction (e.g., <i>or</i>, <i>and</i>).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skyscrapers in the city were damaged in the hurricane. <u>Bridges</u> in the city were damaged in the hurricane. <i>Skyscrapers and bridges in the city were damaged in the hurricane.</i> • When they travel, migratory birds need safe habitat. When they travel, migratory birds need <u>regular supplies of food</u>. <i>When they travel, migratory birds need safe habitat and regular supplies of food.</i>
<p>Adjectives & Adverbs: When a sentence simply contains an adjective or adverb that modifies the noun or verb of another sentence, the adjective or adverb from the first sentence can be embedded in the related sentence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry regions are at risk for chronic water shortages. <u>Overpopulated</u> regions are at risk for chronic water shortages. <i>Dry and overpopulated regions are at risk for chronic water shortages.</i> • Health care costs have risen nationwide. Those health care costs have risen <u>quickly</u>. <i>Health care costs have risen quickly nationwide.</i>



<p>Connecting Words: One or more sentences are combined with connecting words.</p> <p>Coordinating conjunctions (e.g., <i>and, but</i>) link sentences on an equal basis.</p> <p>Subordinating conjunctions (e.g., <i>after, until, unless, before, while, because</i>) link sentences with one of the sentences subordinate or dependent on the other.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The house was falling apart. No one seemed to care. (but) <i>The house was falling apart, but no one seemed to care.</i> • The glaciers began to melt. The earth's average temperature increased. (because) <i>The glaciers began to melt because the earth's average temperature increased.</i>
<p>Relative Clauses: Sentence contains an embedded, subordinate clause that modifies a noun.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The artist was the most popular in the city. The artist painted watercolors of sunsets. (who) <i>The artist who painted watercolors of sunsets was the most popular in the city.</i>
<p>Appositives: Sentence contains two noun phrases that refer to the same object. When two sentences refer to the same noun, one sentence be reduced to an appositive and embedded in the other sentence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The explorer paddled the kayak across the raging river. The explorer was <u>an expert in handling boats</u>. <i>The explorer, an expert in handling boats, paddled the kayak across the raging river.</i>
<p>Possessive Nouns: A sentence that describes possession or ownership can be reduced to a possessive noun and embedded in another sentence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some historians view the Louisiana Purchase as the most important expansion of United States territory. The Louisiana Purchase was <u>President Jefferson's</u> achievement. <i>Some historians view President Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase as the most important expansion of United States territory.</i>

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Writing (1)

The act of writing contains its own inner tensions. Writers must abide by a host of rules that govern the mechanics and conventions of writing yet are also expected—within the constraints of those rules-- to formulate original, even creative, thoughts. It is no wonder that many students find writing to be a baffling exercise and have little sense of how to break larger writing assignments into predictable, achievable subtasks. But of course writing can be taught and writing can be mastered. The best writing instruction places the process of written expression on a timeline: Good writers first plan their writing. Then they write. Once a draft has been created, good writers review and revise their work. While the stages of the writing process are generally sequential, good writers also find themselves jumping frequently between these stages (for example, collecting additional notes and writing new sections of a paper as part of the revision process). Depending upon their stage of development as writers, struggling student writers may benefit from the following strategies:

- **Content: Memorize a Story Grammar Checklist** (Reid & Lienemann, 2006). Students write lengthier stories that include greater detail when they use a memorized strategy to judge their writing-in-progress. These young writers are taught a simple mnemonic device with 7 elements: 'WWW, What=2, How = 2'. This mnemonic translates into a story grammar checklist: WHO the main character is; WHERE the story takes place; WHEN the story occurs; WHAT the main character(s) do or plan to do; WHAT happens next; HOW the story concludes; and HOW the character(s) feel about their experiences. Students are taught this strategy through teacher demonstration, discussion, teacher modeling; and student use of the strategy with gradually fading teacher support. When students use the 'WWW, What=2, How = 2' tactic independently, they may still need occasional prompting to use it in their writing. NOTE: Teachers can apply this intervention idea to any genre of writing (e.g., persuasive essay), distilling its essential elements into a similar short, easily memorized checklist to teach to students.
- **Fluency: Have Students Write Every Day** (Graham, Harris & Larsen, 2001). Short daily writing assignments can build student writing fluency and make writing a more motivating activity. For struggling writers, formal writing can feel much like a foreign language, with its own set of obscure grammatical rules and intimidating vocabulary. Just as people learn another language more quickly and gain confidence when they use it frequently, however, poor writers gradually develop into better writers when they are prompted to write daily--and receive rapid feedback and encouragement about that writing. The teacher can encourage daily writing by giving short writing assignments, allowing time for students to journal about their learning activities, requiring that they correspond daily with pen pals via email, or even posting a question on the board as a bell-ringer activity that students can respond to in writing for extra credit. Short daily writing tasks have the potential to lower students' aversion to writing and boost their confidence in using the written word.
- **Fluency: Self-Monitor and Graph Results to Increase Writing Fluency** (Rathvon, 1999). Students gain motivation to write through daily monitoring and charting of their own and

classwide rates of writing fluency. At least several times per week, assign your students timed periods of 'freewriting' when they write in their personal journals. Freewriting periods all the same amount of time each day. After each freewriting period, direct each student to count up the number of words he or she has written in the daily journal entry (whether spelled correctly or not). Next, tell students to record their personal writing-fluency score in their journal and also chart the score on their own time-series graph for visual feedback. Then collect the day's writing-fluency scores of all students in the class, sum those scores, and chart the results on a large time-series graph posted at the front of the room. At the start of each week, calculate that week's goal of increasing total class words written by taking last week's score and increasing by five percent. At the end of each week, review the class score and praise students if they have shown good effort.

- **Instruction: Essentials of Good Teaching Benefit Struggling Writers** (Gersten, Baker, & Edwards, 1999). Teachers are most successful in reaching students with writing delays when their instruction emphasizes the full writing process, provides strategy sheets, offers lots of models of good writing, and gives students timely editorial feedback. Good instructors build their written expression lessons around the 3 stages of writing—planning, writing, and revision—and make those stages clear and explicit. Skilled instructors also provide students with 'think sheets' that outline step-by-step strategies for tackle the different phases of a writing assignment (e.g., taking concise notes from research material; building an outline; proofreading a draft). Students become stronger writers when exposed to different kinds of expressive text, such as persuasive, narrative, and expository writing. Teachers can make students more confident and self-sufficient as writers when they give them access to plentiful examples of good prose models that the student can review when completing a writing assignment. Finally, strong writing teachers provide supportive and timely feedback to students about their writing. When teachers or classmates offer writing feedback to the student, they are honest but also maintain an encouraging tone.
- **Motivation: Stimulate Interest With an Autobiography Assignment** (Bos & Vaughn, 2002). Assigning the class to write their own autobiographies can motivate hard-to-reach students who seem uninterested in most writing assignments. Have students read a series of autobiographies of people who interest them. Discuss these biographies with the class. Then assign students to write their own autobiographies. (With the class, create a short questionnaire that students can use to interview their parents and other family members to collect information about their past.) Allow students to read their finished autobiographies for the class.
- **Organization: Build an Outline by Talking Through the Topic** (The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d./ 23 December 2006). Students who struggle to organize their notes into a coherent outline can tell others what they know about the topic—and then capture the informal logical structure of that conversation to create a working outline. The student studies notes from the topic and describes what he or she knows about the topic and its significance to a listener. (The student may want to audio-record this conversation for later playback.) After the conversation, the student jots down an outline from memory to capture the structure and main ideas of the discussion. This outline 'kernel' can then be expanded and refined into the framework for a paper.
- **Organization: 'Reverse Outline' the Draft** (The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d./ 23 December 2006). Students can improve the internal flow of their compositions through 'reverse outlining'. The student writes a draft of the composition. Next, the student reads through the draft, jotting notes in the margins that signify the main idea of each paragraph or section. Then the student organizes the margin notes into an outline to reveal the organizational structure of the paper. This 'reverse outline' allows the student to note whether sections of the draft are repetitious, are out of order, or do not logically connect with one another.
- **Planning: Brainstorm to Break the 'Idea' Logjam** (The Writing Center, University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill, n.d./ 28 December 2006). Brainstorming is a time-tested method that can help students to generate motivating topics for writing assignments and uncover new ideas to expand and improve their compositions. Here are four brainstorming strategies to teach to students: **FREEWRITING:** The student sets a time limit (e.g., 15 minutes) or length limit (e.g., one hand-written page) and spontaneously writes until the limit is reached. The writer does not judge the writing but simply writes as rapidly as possible, capturing any thought that comes to mind on the topic. Later, the student reviews the freewriting to pick out any ideas, terms, or phrasing that might be incorporated into the writing assignment. **LISTING:** The student selects a topic based on an idea or key term related to the writing assignment. The writer then rapidly brainstorms a list of any items that might possibly relate to the topic. Finally, the writer reviews the list to select items that might be useful in the assigned composition or trigger additional writing ideas. **SIMILES:** The student selects a series of key terms or concepts linked to the writing assignment. The student brainstorms, using the framework of a simile: " _1_ is like _2_." The student plugs a key term into the first blank and then generates as many similes as possible (e.g., "A SHIP is like a CITY ON THE SEA."). **REFERENCES:** The student jots down key ideas or terms from the writing assignment. He or she then browses through various reference works (dictionaries, encyclopedias, specialized reference works on specific subjects) looking randomly for entries that trigger useful ideas. (Writers might try a variation of this strategy by typing assignment-related search terms into GOOGLE or another online search engine.)

- **Proofreading: Teach A Memory Strategy** (Bos & Vaughn, 2002). When students regularly use a simple, portable, easily memorized plan for proofreading, the quality of their writing can improve significantly. Create a poster to be put up in the classroom summarizing the SCOPE proofreading elements: (1) SPELLING: Are my words spelled correctly; (2) CAPITALIZATION: Have I capitalized all appropriate words, including first words of sentences, proper nouns, and proper names?; (3) ORDER of words: Is my word order (syntax) correct?; (4) PUNCTUATION: Did I use end punctuation and other punctuation marks appropriately? (5) EXPRESSION of complete thoughts: Do all of my sentences contain a noun and verb to convey a complete thought? Review the SCOPE proofreading steps by copying a first-draft writing sample onto an overhead and evaluating the sample with the class using each item from the SCOPE poster. Then direct students to pair off and together evaluate their own writing samples using SCOPE. When students appear to understand the use of the SCOPE plan, require that they use this strategy to proofread all written assignments before turning them in.
- **Proofreading: Use Selective Proofreading With Highlighting of Errors** (Frus, n.d./18 November 2006). To prevent struggling writers from becoming overwhelmed by teacher proofreading corrections, focus on only 1 or 2 proofreading areas when correcting a writing assignment. Create a student 'writing skills checklist' that inventories key writing competencies (e.g., grammar/syntax, spelling, vocabulary, etc.). For each writing assignment, announce to students that you will grade the assignment for overall content but will make proofreading corrections on only 1-2 areas chosen from the writing skills checklist. (Select different proofreading targets for each assignment matched to common writing weaknesses in your classroom.) Also, to prevent cluttering the student's paper with potentially discouraging teacher comments and editing marks, underline problems in the student's text with a highlighter and number the highlighted errors sequentially at the left margin of the student paper. Then (if necessary) write teacher comments on a separate feedback sheet to explain the writing errors. (Identify each comment with the matching error-number from the left margin of the student's worksheet.) With fewer proofreading comments, the student can better attend to the teacher feedback. Also, even a heavily edited student assignment looks neat and tidy when teachers use the highlighting/numbering technique—preventing students from becoming disheartened at the site of an assignment scribbled over with corrective comments.
- **Spelling: Leverage the Power of Memory Through Cover-Copy-Compare** (Murphy, Hern, Williams, & McLaughlin, 1990). Students increase their spelling knowledge by copying a

spelling word from a correct model and then recopying the same word from memory. Give students a list of 10-20 spelling words, an index card, and a blank sheet of paper. For each word on the spelling list, the student (1) copies the spelling list item onto a sheet of paper, (2) covers the newly copied word with the index card, (3) writes the spelling word again on the sheet (spelling it from memory), and (4) uncovers the copied word and checks to ensure that the word copied from memory is spelled correctly. If that word is spelled incorrectly, the student repeats the sequence above until the word copied from memory is spelled correctly--then moves to the next word on the spelling list.

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[2] [2] [2]

Jim's Hints

How To' Strategy Sheets on Writing Topics. [5] You can find a library of well-written strategy sheets on advanced writing topics such as defining audience, reorganizing drafts, and making transitions between sections of a paper. The site is sponsored by the Writing Center at the University of North Carolina.

Articles on Writing Instruction. [6] This page contains links to articles on such topics as helping children with disabilities to access skills required for effective writing, employing instruction in memory techniques to teach writing, and the uses of computer-assisted writing instruction. The page is sponsored by the Access Center.

College Writing Center Directory [7]. Some of the best on-line resources for writing instruction and intervention come from college and university writing centers. This page from Purdue University's Writing Lab provides a directory of links to writing centers across the nation and in other parts of the world.

Writing Interventions: A Collaborative Project. [8] Part of a larger collection of intervention ideas, this page contains practical suggestions to improve writing instruction. 'The CSSS Project' is a collaboration between the Illinois State University Departments of School Psychology and Special Education and the Peoria (IL) School District.

Writing Skills Checklist. [9] This 'Writing Skills Checklist' from Intervention Central allows intervention teams to inventory the student's mastery of the components of good writing--including the physical production of writing, mechanics and conventions, content and preparation, and the production and revision of drafts. The checklist also provides intervention ideas to address identified writing problems.

Writing

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