Support Materials for Students with Special Education Needs 2011

Writing
Contents

Writing

INTRODUCTION
Difficulties students may experience in the writing strand .................................. 4

ASSESSMENT
What evidence of learning is required? ................................................................. 6
How will the evidence be gathered? ................................................................. 9

IMPLEMENTATION
Procedures and strategies........................................................................... 11
Writing

Difficulties students may experience in the writing strand

Students may experience difficulty in the writing strand for a range of reasons. These may be related to the skills required for spelling, handwriting and punctuation, knowledge of sentence structure and text types and writing processes. Early difficulties in writing are strongly related to later difficulties in writing, making early intervention essential (Harris, Graham & Mason 2006).

Sentence structure

Some students may experience difficulties with one or more of the following when learning to write sentences:
• writing complete sentences
• progressing to writing more detailed sentence structures (eg compound and complex sentences) (Kameenui & Simmons 1990)
• understanding grammatical concepts and using them accurately in their writing, for example:
  – word order (syntax)
  – word tenses (eg verb tenses)
  – punctuation
  – subject-verb agreement
  – conjunctions to link ideas/events
  – prepositions
  – pronouns
  – articles/plurals
  – word endings (morphemes).
Writing processes

Writing a text involves processes such as drafting, revising, conferencing, editing, proofreading and publishing. Some students may experience difficulties with one or more of the following when undertaking writing processes:

- deciding what to write and selecting relevant ideas and information
- communicating clearly and succinctly, and organising their ideas as appropriate to the purpose of the text (Kameenui & Simmons 1990). Students may write informally, writing the way that they speak
- staying on topic (Riley & Reedy 2000)
- developing writing in an appropriate format with sufficient detail and complexity (Graham & Harris 2005a)
- using vocabulary appropriate to the social purpose and audience of the text
- motivation and/or effort (Graham & Harris 2005a)
- demonstrating originality in their writing (where appropriate).

Students who experience difficulties with writing often demonstrate limited understanding and use of the writing strategies (a type of learning strategy) that effective writers employ during the writing processes. Research suggests that effective writers use strategies such as:

- planning (Graham & Harris 2005a & b)
- goal setting
- active thinking and self-monitoring (Strickland, Ganske & Monroe 2002) to manage the writing processes and to sustain effort
- evaluation/reflection.
What evidence of learning is required?

Given their critical role in developing students’ writing, it is important for teachers to assess and carefully monitor the following aspects of literacy (as appropriate to a student’s stage of learning).

### Writing and aspects of literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonemic awareness</td>
<td>Difficulty with phonemic awareness, particularly segmenting, is a strong predictor of spelling difficulties. Segmenting has particular relevance for spelling using a phonological strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter–sound relationships</td>
<td>Knowledge of letter–sound relationships provides students with a system to attempt to spell unfamiliar words. Students use phonemic awareness to identify units of sound, and letter–sound knowledge to identify the letter or letters that represent each unit. As students’ knowledge of letter–sounds increases, they progress to spelling by segmenting words into larger units of sound. This requires phonological awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word parts and whole words</td>
<td>Students who store a visual representation of word parts or whole words in their memory are able to use this knowledge to assist with spelling. Being able to spell word parts or words from memory enables students to spell more accurately and fluently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling fluency</td>
<td>Insufficient spelling fluency is likely to interfere with the writing processes and, consequently, writing output (Riley &amp; Reedy 2000). It may also affect students’ motivation to write. Fluency with spelling enables students to focus more of their attention on what they are writing, and strategies they are using, rather than having to switch attention between spelling and what they want to write (Graham &amp; Harris 2005a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwriting</td>
<td>Difficulty, or lack of fluency, with handwriting is likely to interfere with writing processes as students have to focus their attention on accurately producing letters. It may also affect students’ motivation to write. Handwriting fluency enables students to focus more of their attention on content and writing processes (Graham, Harris &amp; Chorzempa 2002; Graham &amp; Harris 2005a). Handwriting is particularly important given that students are often required to demonstrate their learning through writing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing and aspects of literacy (cont)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence structure</td>
<td>The ability to write a simple sentence provides the basis for the development of more complex writing. More skilled writers produce longer and more complex sentences which include more clauses and phrases. They are able to use a variety of sentence structures, making their writing more interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Vocabulary knowledge is important in producing language appropriate to the purpose of a text. Students who have a wider vocabulary are better equipped to write using appropriate, sophisticated and complex language and thus make their writing more interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of text types</td>
<td>Students use their knowledge of text types to structure texts and use grammar appropriate to the purpose of a text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For students experiencing difficulty in writing, teachers should undertake diagnostic assessment. This enables the teacher to identify the areas of difficulty and to determine appropriate intervention strategies.

Below are examples of what may be observed by a teacher and the contributing knowledge, skills and strategies which may require assessment/further investigation.

Investigating writing skills/strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What may be observed</th>
<th>Contributing skills стрategies which may require assessment/ further investigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing accuracy</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spells inaccurately</td>
<td>• articulation and segmentation of sounds in words based on phonemic awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• writes illegibly</td>
<td>• memory of the orthographic representation of letters, word-parts or words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• forms letters incorrectly</td>
<td>• letter–sound knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uses inadequate spacing</td>
<td>• pencil grip (may be related to fine-motor skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uses inconsistent letter-sizes</td>
<td>• posture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• writes incomplete sentences</td>
<td>• knowledge of correct letter formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uses incorrect syntactic structure</td>
<td>• motor memory, ie memory of the pattern of movement to produce a letter (this may be related to insufficient practice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• understanding words as discrete units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• spatial awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• conventions of print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• concept of a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knowledge of sentence structure and grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Investigating writing skills/strategies (cont)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What may be observed</th>
<th>Contributing skills/strategies which may require assessment/further investigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing fluency</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The student:</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• writes slowly or in a laboured way</td>
<td>• fluency with spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• produces a limited number of words</td>
<td>• fluency with handwriting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• work may be unfinished</td>
<td>• planning strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• lacks motivation</td>
<td>• content knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• planning strategies</td>
<td>• understanding of the purpose for writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The student:</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• writes short, simple sentences</td>
<td>• fluency with writing simple sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• starts sentences in a similar way and follows a similar structure</td>
<td>• knowledge of sentence structures (e.g., compound and complex sentences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• exposure to texts and knowledge of sentence starters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing processes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The student:</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• uses limited vocabulary/detail</td>
<td>• vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• writes off-topic</td>
<td>• spelling and handwriting fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• loses continuity</td>
<td>• knowledge of the writing processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• rushes into writing</td>
<td>• motivation/purpose for writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spends limited time on the writing processes</td>
<td>• planning, reviewing, goal-setting strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• forgets ideas/or plans</td>
<td>• remembering to refer to visual plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text types</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The student:</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• does not write as appropriate to a particular text type</td>
<td>• knowledge of the structure, organisation and grammatical features of text types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• selecting and using a text type appropriate to the purpose of writing and relationship to reader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How will the evidence be gathered?

Examples of assessment strategies for particular aspects of writing are listed below. These may involve assessment strategies used for diagnostic purposes. Most of the assessment strategies below can be planned so that they take place as part of teaching and learning experiences.

### Assessing aspects of writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What am I assessing?</th>
<th>How will the evidence be gathered?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phonemic awareness</strong></td>
<td>phonemic awareness activities, eg orally segmenting and manipulating sounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• segmenting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• manipulating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
<td>spelling tests (may be curriculum-based or a published assessment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spelling accuracy</td>
<td>analysing spelling errors in a writing sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• strategy use</td>
<td>interviewing the student about their use of spelling strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Handwriting</strong></td>
<td>observing the student’s handwriting process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• letter formation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• posture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• grip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• paper position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• legibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• spacing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• fluency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentence structure</strong></td>
<td>analysing writing samples. This may include analysis of writing progress in relation to the stages of learning through a portfolio of work samples or a more formal analysis (Howell), for example:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• structure and grammar of text (including punctuation)</td>
<td>total number of words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• complexity of writing</td>
<td>analysis of errors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ratio of correct word sequences (syntax)</td>
<td>types of sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• mean number of clauses per sentence</td>
<td>number of word repetitions (Howell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• comparison of writing samples with peers</td>
<td>number of words longer than 7 letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• number of topic or technical words</td>
<td>% of words not included in published frequent/common word list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• strategy use</td>
<td>observing students’ contributions to the joint construction of texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Writing processes and strategies</strong></td>
<td>comparing drafts and reviewed writing samples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sophistication of vocabulary in writing</td>
<td>surveying students’ knowledge and application of the writing processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• originality of thought</td>
<td>interviewing students about their use of writing strategies (eg to write a paragraph) (Westwood 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• originality of style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• strategy use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Handwriting assessment

The Handwriting assessment form (Form 8) can be used as evidence of a student’s handwriting skills.

**Purpose:** To assess posture, paper position, pencil grip and movement.

**Instructions**

**Step 1:** Observe the student during a number of classroom writing tasks.

**Step 2:** Record a comment about the aspects of handwriting using Form 8.

---

Analysing the types of sentences used by a student in their writing

Writing samples can provide information about the writing skills a student has acquired. Teachers may use the Sentence analysis record sheet (Form 9) to analyse the types of sentences a student uses.

**Purpose:** To use a writing sample to analyse the types of sentences a student uses in their writing. This is used to compare a student’s sentence development to what is expected for their stage.

**Instructions**

**Step 1:** Select a writing sample that is typical of a student’s writing.

**Step 2:** For each sentence, identify the type of sentence.

**Step 3:** Record the number of sentences at each stage using Form 9.

**Step 4:** Consider:

- at which stage is the student mainly writing
- what aspects of writing need attention.
Procedures and strategies

Writing is the representation of language in text. It involves the application of visible symbols in a systematic way.

As encompassed in the *English K–10 Syllabus* and supported by research, all students benefit from the explicit teaching of spelling, handwriting (p 15), sentence writing (p 16) and writing processes (p 21) (drafting, revising, conferencing, editing, proofreading, publishing) to produce texts (using appropriate grammar and text features). Students should be provided with regular opportunities to apply their knowledge, strategies and skills in meaningful and authentic contexts both in English and other KLAs (Westwood 2004, Graham & Harris 2005a). Teachers should also ensure that students are provided with regular opportunities to engage in a series of writing processes to produce a finished text type (Baker, Russell & Steve 2003).

Effective instruction can minimise the number of students who experience difficulty with writing and reduce the severity of the difficulties that students may otherwise experience (Graham & Harris 2005b). Students experiencing difficulty with writing are likely to require more intense and explicit instruction (Graham & Harris 2005a).

It should be noted that some students may use alternative means to communicate (eg pictures, assistive technology etc). These are legitimate forms of communication and can be used as a basis for developing written language.

Spelling

Spelling is best taught explicitly and then applied in the context of meaningful writing experiences. Learning to spell is closely related to learning to read, and like reading is supported by sound awareness (particularly phonemic awareness (Reading p 8)), knowledge of letter–sound relationships (Reading p 11) and visual memory of word parts or whole words.

Accuracy and fluency with spelling is important to writing, as it frees a student’s working memory to focus on the higher-order processes required to communicate effectively. Fluency with spelling has the potential to enhance the quality and quantity of students’ writing output (Graham & Harris 2005b).

Key features of effective spelling instruction include:

- starting with simple words progressing to more difficult words
- introducing a small number of words at a time. Students experiencing difficulties will require a smaller number of words to make learning more manageable
- grouping words which include the same letter patterns together (eg each, beach, teach, reach)
- explicitly teaching students how to use a range of spelling strategies and providing sufficient opportunities for practice
- programming multi-sensory activities to assist with memory (eg ‘Look-Cover-Write-Check’, tracing, manipulating letters on the interactive whiteboard, visualising)
- modelling how to use learning strategies to support word learning (eg mnemonics)
- relating spelling instruction to reading instruction
- supporting students to use resources (such as dictionaries, glossaries, word walls) to assist with spelling when required and where appropriate.
Spelling may support students in the reading strand to:

- develop more complete connections between the pronunciation of words and their spelling
- become familiar with orthographic patterns to assist in remembering words as sight words (Graham, Harris & Chorzempa 2002)
- develop etymological (semantic) knowledge
- make sense of words that they read.

While learning to spell supports reading, teachers should not assume that fluent readers will automatically learn to correctly spell words that they can read, or acquire and utilise spelling strategies.

**Spelling strategies**

(*NSW DET 1998*)

In the early stages, spelling will predominantly be undertaken using phonological and visual strategies. As students progress through the stages of learning, they will use a wider range of spelling strategies, eg morphemic and word origin spelling strategies.

**Phonological spelling strategies**

These include:

- using sound awareness, combined with letter–sound relationships to spell words
- segmenting words into separate units of sound and writing each unit in sequence, eg the student says ‘I sounded it out’
- using analogy between a known word and a word to be spelled, eg ‘I know that rain starts with the sound /r/ and ends with the rime ain (letters a i n). I change the /r/ to /st/ to spell stain.’

The teacher:

- links phonemic awareness skills (particularly segmenting) to spelling
- models how to spell by segmenting a word, representing each unit of sound in sequence using letter–sound knowledge, eg ‘The word is them. I listen for the separate sounds in the word and say each sound with a pause in between /th/ /e/ /m/. Now I write the word…/th/ t h (the teacher writes th), /e/ (the teacher writes e), /m/ (the teacher writes m). I check the spelling by reading the word and blending the sounds theeemmm. I double-check by asking myself, does the word look right?’
- initially models how to spell by segmenting words into separate phonemes (letters/letter combinations), progressing to larger ‘chunks’ of sound (eg syllables) as students’ letter–sound knowledge increases
- assists students to connect their phonological knowledge to reading and spelling by demonstrating the reversibility of blending and segmenting (ie pulling words apart and putting them back together)
- teaches spelling generalisations, eg ‘When I hear the sound a (ie the letter name) at the end of a word, I know it is spelt ay’
Visual spelling strategies

These include:

• attempting to spell a word in a number of ways and choosing the attempt that looks right
• looking for familiar visual patterns to help with a spelling (for example ed, ing endings)
• writing words or word parts from memory.

The teacher:

• uses ‘think aloud’ to model using a visual strategy to spell a word (eg ‘I write an attempt from memory. I check if it looks right.’)
• teaches students to spell irregular words using letter names
• models and encourages students to use ‘Look-Cover-Write-Check’ for irregular words to assist them to remember words through visual memory
• reinforces that even irregularly spelled words are likely to include some regular letter–sounds
• highlights the difficult part of a word to assist with visual memory
• builds up students’ knowledge of letter strings (orthographic patterns) representing common units of sound (for example _ight, _tion) through explicit teaching and targeted focus during reading and writing.

Morphemic spelling strategies

These include:

• thinking about whether the meaning of a word assists with the spelling, eg asking ‘Does the meaning provide me with clues?’
• relating new words to known words or word parts (morphemes) eg asking ‘Does the word have words in it I know?’ , ‘Does the word have parts I know?’
• thinking about the structure and meaning of words and how words change with changes in morphology, eg adding an ‘ed’ ending to a base word.

The teacher:

• explains that by understanding how to use and add common morphemes (eg plurals, prefixes, suffixes, comparatives) the student can extend the number of words that can be spelled and understood
• highlights changes to the meaning and/or grammar of a base word that occur from the addition of morphemes, for example
  – ‘I add an s to the word tree to make it plural. By adding an s I change the number of trees to more than one’
  – ‘I add an ed to the word pick, the word becomes picked. It becomes past tense, ie something that I did, not something I am doing’
– ‘I add \textit{er} to the word \textit{build} which is a doing word (verb) and it becomes \textit{builder} which is a person who builds (noun)’
– ‘The prefixes \textit{anti} (antisocial), \textit{dis} (disobedient), \textit{im} (impossible), \textit{un} (unattractive), \textit{ir} (irrational) added to a describing word (adjective) make an opposite word’

• highlights spelling generalisations for adding morphemes (ie how a word changes), for example:
  – ‘When I add \textit{ing} to a word ending in \textit{e}, I drop the \textit{e} before adding the \textit{ing}’
  – ‘When I make words that end in \textit{s}, \textit{sh}, \textit{ch}, and \textit{z} plural, I add an \textit{es}’

\begin{itemize}
  \item Note: Examples of generalisations for each stage can be found in \textit{Programming & Strategies Handbook: Assisting Year 3 and Year 5 students who need additional support in literacy} (NSW DET 2000).
\end{itemize}

• uses word webs to demonstrate changes that occur to a base word by changing the morphology (eg plurals, compound words, comparatives, prefixes, suffixes)
• models how the meaning of words changes when two words are joined together (compound words).

\section*{Word origin spelling strategies}

These include:
• identifying the origin of words to assist with spelling and comprehending unfamiliar words
• identifying how words are often arranged in families with similar characteristics.

The teacher:
• highlights the origin of words and/or word parts and provides examples of usage, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix/suffix</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dis_</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>not, opposite of</td>
<td>disapproving, disqualify, disprove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ful</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>full of</td>
<td>hopeful, cheerful, joyful, spiteful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ic, _ics</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>pertaining to, having to do with</td>
<td>mathematics, gymnastics, historic, economics, dramatic, politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mega_</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>great or big</td>
<td>megabyte, megastar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\section*{Support Materials for Students with Special Education Needs}

\section*{IMPLEMENTATION}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Prefix/suffix} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Origin} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Meaning} \hspace{1cm} \textbf{Examples}
\end{center}

\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|l|}
\hline
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix/suffix</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dis_</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>not, opposite of</td>
<td>disapproving, disqualify, disprove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ful</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>full of</td>
<td>hopeful, cheerful, joyful, spiteful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_ic, _ics</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>pertaining to, having to do with</td>
<td>mathematics, gymnastics, historic, economics, dramatic, politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mega_</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>great or big</td>
<td>megabyte, megastar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
\hline
\end{tabular}
Handwriting

Difficulties with the formation of letters or insufficient fluency with handwriting can interfere with writing processes, as well as spelling. Improvements in a student’s handwriting has the potential to enhance sentence construction and writing output (Graham & Harris 2005b). Teachers may use the scope and sequence of phonological and graphological processing skills to assist them in planning and programming for handwriting development.

Following are examples of how a teacher may model effective procedures when teaching handwriting.

The teacher:

- Teaches letters that are formed using similar strokes together, for example: 1, i, t and a, e, o (Graham & Harris 2005b)
- Starts with letters that are easier to form, for example: 1, t
- Models letter formation using ‘think aloud’, explaining and/or marking the starting point, number and direction of strokes, eg ‘I make the letter t by starting at the top. I make a straight line down and lift my pencil at the bottom where it meets the line. I cross the tall line about half-way up and make a line from left to right’ etc
- Separates reversible letters, for example: b, d
- Models how to write words saying each letter name as it is written
- Models and provides feedback on grip, posture and paper placement
- Provides extensive opportunities for practice using a variety of writing implements on a range of surfaces so that the formation of letters is acquired in students’ motor memory
- Closely monitors students’ letter formation, providing specific and corrective feedback
- Provides instructional scaffolding for writing, where necessary (eg lines of an appropriate size, letters for tracing, partially formed letters, starting points)
- Provides a permanent model of correctly formed letters
- Ask students to reflect on their handwriting, eg students:
  - Place a transparent overlay on their work for self-checking (Mastropieri & Scruggs 2002)
  - Circle their best attempt.
Sentence writing

Sentence grammar and punctuation should be taught systematically and explicitly, and later applied to authentic contexts. Speaking and listening and reading experiences provide ideal opportunities to model familiar sentence patterns as a basis for writing. It is important to note that students experiencing difficulties in writing are unlikely to learn how to write sentences and use grammar and punctuation through exposure to reading alone. Some students will require extensive instruction and practice to understand the concept of a sentence, to learn how to write complete sentences, and to progress to writing compound and complex sentences.

Below are examples of effective procedures to teach sentence structure (grammar at the sentence level) (Kameenui & Simmons 1990). Teachers should refer to the scope and sequence of grammar and punctuation for K–6 for detailed information.

Teachers can support students’ understanding and use of grammar by displaying permanent models of sentences or text and highlighting or making reference to the grammar focus.

**Note:** Students may already be using appropriate sentence grammar to write without having acquired explicit and technical knowledge.

**Simple sentence**
*(Early Stage 1)*

The teacher:
- explains the purpose of a sentence, eg the teacher says ‘Sentences group words and ideas so that writing makes sense. This makes writing easier to read and understand.’
- explains the concept, and models the features of a sentence, eg the teacher says ‘A sentence names someone or something. It tells what they are (relational verb) or what they do or are doing (acting, thinking, feeling, saying) (verb). A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. A sentence can also end in a question mark or exclamation mark.’
- uses shared reading of familiar, short texts to explore the use of sentences. The teacher highlights the part of the sentence that tells the person or thing involved in the action and the part that tells the action
- starts with easier learning experiences, progressing to more difficult learning experiences

**Note:** As students are developing their ability to read and write, teachers should program speaking and listening experiences that develop an understanding of sentence level grammar.

Students are provided with opportunities to:
- identify simple sentences to describe a picture from a choice of examples and non-examples
- classify examples and non-examples of simple sentences
- copy sentences using correct punctuation
- complete sentences where the teacher provides part of the sentence (sentence stems or endings) eg ‘________ fell off the chair’ or ‘The dog ________’
- write a simple sentence of their own choosing or based on an action
• order words to create simple sentences. This might involve the use of colour-coded (noun/noun group and verb/verb group) cards, sticky-notes or an interactive whiteboard. Students reflect on ‘Does this sentence make sense?’, ‘Does this sentence sound right?’

• identify parts of a sentence that tell the action and parts that tell the someone or something involved in the action

• write a simple sentence based on a picture

• order a sequence of simple sentences

• write a sequence of simple sentences. This may be based on a shared event/experience

• classify sentences as either statements, questions, commands or exclamations.

Examples and non-examples of a simple sentence:

Purpose: To provide students with opportunities to identify examples and non-examples of sentences.

• ‘John is making a cake’ is a simple sentence because ‘John’ is someone and ‘making a cake’ tells what he is doing
  – ‘John’ is not a simple sentence. It names someone but tells nothing about what he is, or is doing, thinking, feeling, saying
  – ‘Making a cake’ is not a sentence because it does not name somebody or something (verb and object, but no subject). It does not tell who made the cake

• ‘The red balloon went bang’ is a simple sentence. It names something (the red balloon) and what it did (went bang).
  – ‘The red balloon’ is not a sentence because it does not tell about an action (what the balloon did)
  – ‘went bang’ is not a sentence because it does not name someone or something.

Sentence with one or more clauses

(Stage 1)

The teacher:

• explains the purpose of a conjunction, ie the teacher says ‘Conjunctions or joining words are used to join sentences, give additional information and join related ideas/events together.’

• provides opportunities for students to identify conjunctions in a short text (eg and, but, so)

• explains the concept of a clause, eg ‘A clause is a group of words that tell about an action and those involved in an action. A clause must contain a verb (or verb group).’

• explains the concept of a main (independent) clause, eg ‘A main clause is a group of words that has a message and tells what is happening or what is. A main clause can stand alone and may be a single sentence.’

• provides opportunities for students to identify main clauses in short texts, ie students highlight each group of words that contains a message

• explains the concept of a compound sentence, eg ‘A compound sentence is a sentence with more than one main clause. The clauses are joined together by a joining word or conjunction. The conjunction comes before the second clause.’
models how to combine two main clauses to make a compound sentence using a conjunction, eg the teacher says ‘I can make a more detailed sentence that has more than one clause by joining two simple sentences together. A compound sentence has more than one clause. I can join the sentences The boy got a shock and The boy fell off his bike by using the joining word and, eg The boy got a shock and fell off his bike. I delete the boy before the second clause because the and tells me it is about the boy. I could also replace it with the pronoun he.’

starts with easier learning experiences, progressing to more difficult learning experiences.

Students are provided with opportunities to:

• select the best conjunction from a choice of conjunctions (‘and’, ‘but’, ‘so’) to join two simple sentences
• locate conjunctions used to combine clauses in short texts
• cross out conjunctions in a text and discuss the effect
• identify and count the number of clauses in a sentence
• classify sentences as simple sentences or compound sentences (by the number of clauses)
• add a conjunction and a clause to a sentence stem (main clause) to make a compound sentence
• cut a short text into chunks (with conjunctions separately) and reassemble, ensuring that the text still makes sense. Rewrite the text adding punctuation
• identify and combine sentences from their own writing
• write a compound sentence.

Using quoted and reported speech

(Stage 2)

The teacher:

• explains the concept of quoted and reported speech, eg the teacher says ‘Quoted speech tells exactly what someone says. The part someone says is called a quote and is written inside quotation marks. Reported speech is a retelling of what someone says. It does not tell the exact words.’

• starts with easier learning experiences, progressing to more difficult learning experiences.

Students are provided with opportunities to:

• identify quoted and reported speech during shared reading
• identify examples of sentences that include quoted and reported speech from a short text
• underline text that shows what somebody says in short texts (both quoted and reported)
• locate and cut out sentences in a short text that tell what somebody says (both quoted and reported)
• sort sentences into examples of quoted and reported speech
• match sentences including quoted speech to the same information written as reported speech
• identify the part of a given sentence that should be in quotation marks
• rewrite quoted speech as reported speech
• rewrite reported speech as direct speech
• add quotation marks to a short text
• write sentences that contain quoted and reported speech.
Note: In Stage 2, students continue to build on their understanding and use of sentence structure. This involves using the following types of conjunctions to combine sentences:
- cause-effect so, if, but, because, ie students provide a reason for an event or action
- time connectives meanwhile, when
- comparing/contrasting likewise, on the other hand.

Compound and complex sentences
(Stage 3)

The teacher:
- revises the concept of a main clause and provides students with opportunities to identify them in a text
- explains the concept of a dependent clause, eg the teacher says ‘a dependent clause provides information about the circumstances (eg place, time, manner, condition, concession) under which a main clause occurs, will occur or occurred. A dependent clause cannot stand by itself as a message.’
- explains that dependent clauses generally start with conjunctions of place, time, manner, condition or concession
- provides a list of conjunctions and relative pronouns that are often used to start dependent clauses, for example:
  - conjunctions: place where, wherever; time when, since, before, until; manner by, as though; condition if, unless; concession although, while
  - relative pronouns who, whom, which, that
- explains the concept of a complex sentence, eg ‘a complex sentence has a main clause and one or more dependent clauses. The dependent clause provides more detailed information about the main clause.’
- provides students with opportunities to identify dependent clauses in texts using the list of conjunctions to assist
- provides students with opportunities to identify complex sentences in short texts
- models joining simple sentences using conjunctions to create a complex sentence, eg ‘Look at these two simple sentences that tell about the girl in the picture: The girl was dancing with her friends and The girl looked happy. When was the girl looking happy? Let’s write it as one sentence: The girl looked happy when she was dancing with her friends.’ Reinforce that when she was dancing with her friends cannot stand alone as a message. The teacher should also model how to write the sentence with the dependent clause at the beginning, eg When the girl was dancing with her friends, she looked happy.
- starts with easier learning experiences, progressing to more difficult learning experiences.

Students are provided with opportunities to:
- complete sentences where the teacher provides part of the sentence by adding a main clause. Teachers should provide examples where the dependent clause is the sentence stem (eg When the horse bucked, ____________) and the sentence ending (eg The boy fell ____________)}
- cut up a complex sentence, rearrange the words and replace conjunctions with conjunctions of time, place, manner, condition and/or concession
• complete a skeleton writing scaffold by filling in the conjunctions
• write a complex sentence
• write a short text which contains simple, complex and compound sentences.
Writing processes

Research suggests that explicitly teaching students to use the writing strategies that effective writers use during the writing processes has the potential to improve their writing. This includes strategies for:

- planning (Graham & Harris 2005a)
- goal-setting
- active thinking and self-monitoring (Strickland, Ganske & Monroe 2002) to manage the writing processes and to sustain effort
- evaluation/reflection.

Following are examples of procedures to develop processes involved in writing texts. The procedures should be applied as appropriate to the selected text type and students’ stage of learning.

**Before writing a text**

The teacher:

- provides opportunities for students to listen to, read and discuss the text type
- uses shared reading:
  - to provide students with sources of ‘inspiration and ideas’ (Graham & Harris 2005a)
  - to highlight common language patterns for the text type
as an opportunity for students to explore how different authors structure and use grammar. This should include texts in which authors vary the typical structure of the text type (eg start a narrative with the climax and use flashbacks to a sequence of events), particularly in the later stages of learning,

- to explore how authors use language appropriate to an audience (Graham & Harris 2005a)

- to emphasise the importance of vocabulary in making a text interesting

- makes decisions about:
  - writing strategies (p 25) (learning strategies for writing) that will assist students with writing processes, for example:
    - planning
    - goal-setting
  - instructional scaffolding to support students in constructing the text type

### Instructional scaffolding for text types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text type</th>
<th>Examples of instructional scaffolding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recount</td>
<td>key questions, flow charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>key questions (p 29), story maps, storyboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>flow charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Report</td>
<td>mind maps (p 30), spidergrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>mind maps, spidergrams, cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>key questions, sentence starters (p 30), graphic outlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>sentence starters, graphic outlines, mnemonics (p 29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>mind maps, spidergrams, y-charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
<td>key questions, sentence starters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- adjustments required by individual students, eg word prediction software, symbols. This may include determining alternatives to writing, eg a scribe, a recording device

- provides opportunities for group brainstorming before independent writing, enabling students to share ideas and vocabulary. The teacher records and displays relevant vocabulary as a reference for students

- displays permanent models of the text type and vocabulary (eg word walls), encouraging students to refer to the models.
During the writing of a text

Drafting

The teacher:

• uses a scaffold for the text type to construct a first draft
• reinforces that students should add to or amend their plan as they think of new ideas or find new information
• provides guided practice by jointly constructing a first draft
• provides opportunities for students to write a first draft using a planning (p 25) or other scaffold. The teacher instructs students to:
  – focus on the writing processes, rather than the accuracy of spelling or neatness. This enables students to think about what they are writing and encourages risk-taking (Ganske, Monroe & Strickland 2003)
  – think about vocabulary (Zito, Adkins & Gavins 2007) to make their writing interesting
• emphasises the importance of effort, prompting students to include as much relevant detail as possible (Riley & Reedy 2000)
• displays criteria for learning appropriate to the text type as a reference for students (ie what the teacher or peer will be looking for in the student’s writing)
• reminds students to use resources as required, eg online dictionaries, permanent models of text types etc.
Revising and editing

The teacher:

- explains that revising involves changes to the content and/or the addition of detail to improve the quality of writing
- models the revising process using ‘think aloud’ (p 27)
- sets goals or provides examples of goals to improve writing, for example:
  - add three things (Baker, Russell & Steve 2003)
  - add more detail
  - vary the types of sentences (Riley & Reedy 2000), and start them in different ways
  - add an additional complication in a narrative
  - replace vocabulary with more interesting vocabulary
- provides opportunities for small groups to undertake a writers’ conference, providing feedback on each other’s drafts using the criteria for learning. This enables students to include an audience perspective. The teacher may provide students with evaluation cards (p 26) to assist them with revising
- models the use of markings that can assist with revising and editing, eg underlining, arrows, highlighting, writing in margins
- provides opportunities for students to incorporate feedback from their writer’s conference into their writing
- provides feedback on students’ revisions and suggests areas for further attention
- provides students with opportunities to proof-read after revising their writing:
  - instructs students to focus on transcription, eg spelling, punctuation, handwriting
  - provides instructional scaffolding (Teaching and learning p 26) to assist students in remembering what to look for when proof-reading (mnemonic – COPS).

Note: The use of ICT for writing makes revising easier for students.

Publishing

The teacher:

- provides opportunities for students to publish texts. This may involve the addition of illustrations, use of a range of software etc.

After the writing of a text

The teacher:

- provides opportunities for students to share their writing and writing processes with their peers and family
- provides feedback to students about their writing
- uses students’ work samples to undertake an analysis of errors
- provides opportunities for students to reflect on their writing:
  - focusing on their goals, ie how many story parts did I include?
  - using reflection questions, eg ‘What did you learn?’, ‘What did you do well?’, ‘What could you do better next time?’
  - using previous writing samples to compare the quality and quantity of writing
  - identifying strengths and weaknesses (Hess & Wheldall 1990)
- uses students’ writing as a basis for learning experiences in other strands and KLAs (eg acting out a student’s narrative).
Writing strategies

The writing strategies provided below are:

• general to support the writing processes
• specific to a text-type or strategy (p 28).

Some of the learning strategies also include instructional scaffolding to support students in using the strategy.

General

Planning

**Purpose:** To provide an opportunity to think about, gather, organise and record a plan of what they will write. The plan provides a permanent reference point, enabling students to focus their working memory on the writing processes. Students should add to and adapt their plan as they write.

Planning is particularly important for students with memory difficulties and students who experience difficulties with spelling, handwriting and/or writing sentences.

**Instructional scaffolding: Think sheet for a factual text**

• What do I know?
• Who am I writing for?
• What is my message?
• What will my main points be?
• How will I organise my writing?
• What will the sequence be?
• How can I make my writing more interesting to read?
Goal-setting

**Purpose:** Goal-setting assists students to focus on, monitor and improve aspects of the writing processes and/or the quality of their product (Graham & Harris 2005). Goal-setting may also provide a mechanism to increase students' motivation.

In deciding on goals, students should reflect on their previous writing samples for a particular text type.

**Note:** Teachers may need to assist some students to determine their goals.

**Examples of goals:**
- I will include all the story parts
- I will increase the number of describing words I use
- I will spend at least 10 minutes planning
- I will write more words than last time
- I will include more complex sentences

Revising

**Purpose:** To indicate parts of a draft that they like and parts that require attention.

**Instructional scaffolding: Evaluation cards**

Students place or attach evaluation cards on their own or a peer's writing.

**Examples of evaluation cue cards** (Graham & Harris 2005):
- I like this part
- Make language more interesting
- Provide further detail
- Does not sound right
- Look at order
**Instructional scaffolding: Think aloud**

**Purpose:** ‘Think aloud’ makes explicit the metacognitive strategies used by the teacher to review a short text.

‘I re-read my writing, I start by reading the whole text and ask myself does my writing suit the purpose and audience? I check whether I am happy with the order of paragraphs and layout. Then I re-read each paragraph.’

- ‘I check that all sentences in the paragraph revolve around one idea, and I have a topic sentence, developing sentence, supporting sentence and a concluding or linking sentence’ (Curriculum Corporation Vic 2005)
- ‘I delete any information I don’t need’
- ‘I check my spelling, highlighting any words that do not look right’
- ‘I use a dictionary to check words I am not sure about’
- ‘I read each sentence. I ask myself, for example:
  - “Am I happy with the words?”
  - “Do I need to add more detail?”
  - “Can I make the sentences more interesting?”’
- ‘After I have made all the changes, I read my writing again.’

**Proofreading**

**Instructional scaffolding: Mnemonic**

**Purpose:** To assist students to remember what to check when proofreading.

C  Capitals
O  Overall appearance
P  Punctuation
S  Spelling
Support Materials for Students with Special Education Needs

**Metacognitive strategies**

**Purpose:** To assist students to regulate their thinking, feelings and actions while writing. These may be modelled by the teacher or developed and rehearsed by students prior to commencing the writing processes.

**Examples of statements:**

- **self-instruction**
  - ‘My goal is to use all parts of a story’
  - ‘I make a plan before I write, so I can concentrate on my writing’
  - ‘I add to my plan as I write so I don’t forget my ideas’
  - ‘I take my time’ (Zito, Adkins & Gavins 2007)

- **self-questioning**
  - ‘Is there anything I have written that is not clear?’
  - ‘Can I replace words to make it more interesting/appealing?’
  - ‘Are there any errors I should correct?’

- **self-monitoring**
  - ‘Have I met my goals?’
  - ‘Am I referring back to my plan?’
  - ‘I count the number of words to see if I have written more than last time’

**Specific to a text type or strategy**

**Procedural prompts to use a phonological strategy for spelling**

**Purpose:** To use a set of steps to assist with spelling a word.

**Instructions**

**Step 1:** Say the word

**Step 2:** Say the word slowly and ‘stretch’ the word

**Step 3:** Separate the sounds with a pause between each sound

**Step 4:** Count the sounds in the word

**Step 5:** Identify any sound combinations

**Step 6:** Identify letters to represent the sounds

**Step 7:** Ask yourself ‘Is there more than one possible spelling?’

**Step 8:** Ask yourself ‘Are there any rules that help?’

**Step 9:** Write your ‘best’ attempt

**Step 10:** Ask yourself ‘Does it look right?’

**Step 11:** Modify your spelling (if appropriate).
Key questions for a narrative

**Purpose:** To support students to plan for and structure a narrative.

**Question stems for narratives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Key questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting (character, place, time)</td>
<td>Who?/What?, Where?, When?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting event</td>
<td>What?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character’s goal(s)</td>
<td>What?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions to achieve goal</td>
<td>How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character’s reaction</td>
<td>How?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mnemonic for an exposition**

**Purpose:** To remind students of the structure of an exposition.

The following examples have been developed for persuasive essays (Harris, Graham & Mason 2006):

**T** Tell what you think

**R** Reasons

**E** Explain

**E** End it

or

**P** Point

**E** Expand

**E** Give examples

**L** Link to the initial point
Procedural prompts to create a concept map for report writing

Purpose: To summarise what students know; to visually represent the relationships between concepts or information/ideas.

Instructions

**Step 1:** Gather information through brainstorming, interviewing, reading

**Step 2:** Write the central idea or concept in the centre or at the top

**Step 3:** Write related ideas/questions/headings around or under the central idea or concept

**Step 4:** Link related ideas to assist with writing

**Step 5:** Mark information to be included in the report

**Step 6:** Add additional information under related ideas/questions as you write.

Sentence starters for a discussion
*(based on Riley & Reedy 2000)*

Purpose: To prompt students to structure a discussion.

**Examples of sentence starters:**

We think that …
Our first reason …
Our second reason …
Some people think that …
They say …
Although some people think that …
We think we have shown …