

Enriched Writers' Workshop for Students with Developmental Disabilities

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Disclosures

My name is Janet Sturm. I'm here to discuss the Enriched Writers' Workshop—an approach for adolescent students with DD. I am in the process of publishing this writing instructional approach. Many of the concepts presented will be in this future product/publication. I will receive royalty payments from the sale of this product/publication.

I was recently an issue editor for *Topics in Language Disorders*. I will refer to my publications as well as those of other authors in that issue.

Beginning Writers



Writing Development – Beginning Writers

In early writing development students -

- move from drawing to scribbling to inventive spelling
- are single session writers
- naturally choose a variety of genres & topics
- may not yet have a sense of audience
- use spoken and written skills to convey meaning
- use pictures to convey meaning
- develop conventional spelling over time (after lots of opportunities)

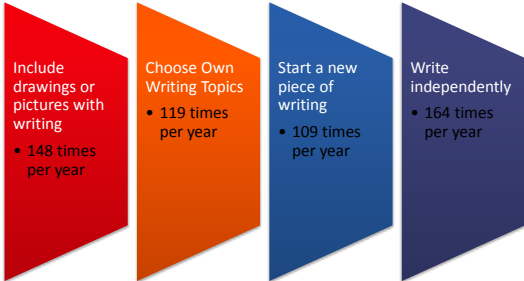
Writing Development – Skilled Writers

In later development students -

- Convey what they know through writing
- Focus on all processes (planning, composing, revising, editing)
- Use sophisticated word choice and syntax
- Integrate information from a variety of sources
- Use of sophisticated structures across genres & use writing for a variety of purposes (enjoyment, tell what you know, tell a story, persuade)
- Know “why” they are writing and are able to communicate message based on their audience
- Compose multiple drafts

Writing In General Education First Grade Classrooms (180 day school year)

Students...



(Richards, Sturm, & Call, 2012)

Text Types Naturally Chosen by Kindergarten & 1st Grade Students

Kindergarten	1 st Grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labels • Opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Stories • Plans • Descriptions

(Call & Sturm, Manuscript in Preparation)

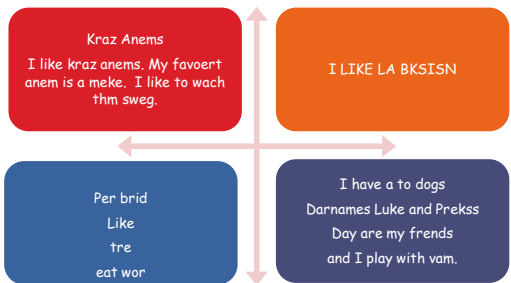
Writing Instruction & Students with Developmental Disabilities

The instructional focus has targeted -

- social, vocational, and daily living skills
- basic functional literacy skills
- decontextualized drill and practice
 - Tracing
 - Copying
 - Worksheets

(Summarized by Hedricks, Katims, & Carr, 1999)

Who are these beginning writers?

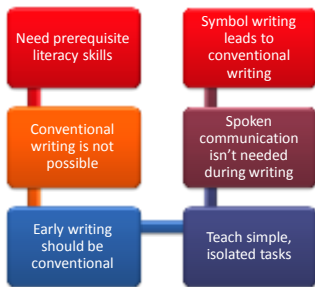


Recognize Capability

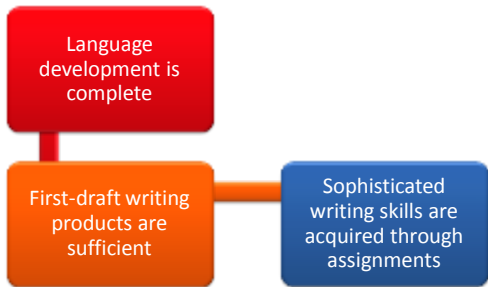
"When you first started this program I thought, 'Well, yeah, okay, good.' But, after 30-something years of teaching, I would have never thought that some of the kids you are getting to write were capable of writing."

—Sue Courington,
high school special education teacher

Assumptions About Emergent Beginning Writers With DD



Assumptions About Conventional Beginning Writers With DD



High-Quality Differentiated Instruction:
The Enriched Writers' Workshop

The Enriched Writers' Workshop is based on scientifically derived, best practices of instruction.



Effective Writing Intervention for Elementary School
Children: The Baker's Dozen (Graham, 2011)

1. Strategy instruction
2. Self-regulation added to strategy instruction
3. Peer assistance (peers working together)
4. Teacher transcription skills (e.g., spelling & handwriting)
5. Teaching text structure
6. Product goals (assigned goals for the written product they are to complete)

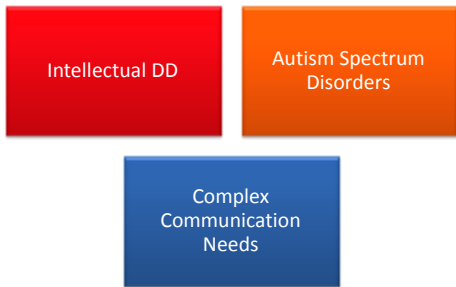
Effective Writing Intervention for Elementary School
Children: The Baker's Dozen (Graham, 2011)

7. Word processing (word processing with assistive features – Great potential!)
8. Process approaches
9. Pre-writing
10. Composing (increasing how much students wrote)
11. Imagery/creativity instruction (taught how to form images or received instruction designed to increase creativity)
12. Assessment (including adult or peer feedback to students)

Evidence of Effective Writing Instruction & Students with Developmental Disabilities

Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (IDD)	Complex Communication Needs	Autism Spectrum Disorders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joseph & Konrad (2009) reviewed 9 writing intervention studies with students who have IDD • Overall results showed that they can learn strategies to improve writing quantity and quality • Strategy instruction is the most frequently investigated approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Koppenhaver & Williams (2010) reviewed 8 writing intervention students for students with CCN • Results showed that improvement in writing occurs with systematic instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asaro-Saddler (2010) improved planning and self-regulation strategies & story writing ability • Asaro-Saddler & Bak (2012) improved planning and self-regulation strategies & persuasive essays

Students in the Enriched Writers' Workshop



Students With DD: Language, Communication, and Writing Skills

Language, Communication, and Social Profiles

- Range from a beginning communicator to a relatively sophisticated communicator
- Beginning communicators: Beginning communicators who vocalize, use gestures, symbols, or very limited manual signs or words
- Sophisticated communicators: Active communicators who use words and sentences

Writing Profiles

- Present as beginning writers who range from scribbling to coherent and cohesive paragraph-level writing
- Many demonstrate fine motor needs

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Writing Goals

CCSS	IEP Goals
Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.	<p><u>Method 1:</u> When presented with two different personal photo choices that support informative topics (e.g., All about ...), the student will choose a topic during 4/5 writing session probes.</p> <p><u>Method 2:</u> When given single-word descriptive binary choices, the child will choose a word that will name (e.g., cat) and describe (e.g., little) what he/she is writing about during 4/5 writing session probes (instructor scribes response).</p> <p><u>Method 3:</u> The student will be able to use a combination of drawing/photos and writing to name and describe a topic during 4/5 writing session probes.</p>

Sturm (2012), p. 344

CCSS and Communication Goals

CCSS	IEP Goals
Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and instructors in small and larger groups. a) Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others, taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion). b) Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.	<p>During 4/5 Mini-Lesson sessions, ____ will spontaneously initiate at least one comment that contributes to the topic being discussed.</p> <p>During 4/5 Author's Chair sessions, ____ will make consistent eye contact with his/her peers when they are speaking to her/him.</p> <p>During 4/5 Author's Chair sessions, ____ will gain a peer's attention by calling his/her name before asking a question or making a comment.</p>
Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.	By the end of the school year, ____ will spontaneously initiate three different questions or comments during 4/5 Author's Chair sessions.

Sturm (2012), p. 345

Enriched Writers' Workshop

Writers' Workshop

- Social-interactive learning environment
- Writing is communication
- Everyone is an author
- Students own their writing
- Students publish their work

Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1983, 1991, 1994, 2002; Graves, 1994; Harris & Graham, 1996; Reif, 1992

Social Communication Training

- Targets increases in:
 - assertiveness and responsiveness
 - range of communication functions
 - vocabulary diversity
 - eye contact

Cognitive Strategy Instruction

- Teaches students how to set goals, engage in self-regulation, and evaluate performance
- Teaches meta-cognitive problem solving
- Provides scaffold, showing what good writers do

Harris & Graham, 1996; Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995

Process-Based Approaches

In Writers' Workshop -

- All work together to share and help
- Mini-lessons provide modeling, discussion, and collaboration
- Students make decisions about what to write
- Student ownership & responsibility is emphasized
- Students write for real audiences & real purposes
- Teachers and peers confer around writing
- All engage in authentic instruction & collaborate in evaluating their writing efforts
- Authorship is celebrated!

Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1983, 1991, 1994, 2002; Graves, 1994; Harris & Graham, 1996; Reif, 1992

Quick Tip

You Can't By-Pass Writing

Students need to engage in meaningful writing every day!

Cognitive Strategy Instruction Techniques

Cognitive strategies are -

- Integrated into process writing approaches
- Personalized for individual student needs
- Teaching metacognitive problem solving
- Teaching students how to set goals, engage in self-regulation, & evaluate performance
- Teaching students scaffolds showing what good writers do
- Introduced systematically & offer repeated opportunities to learn and master the skill

Harris & Graham, 1996; Pressley & Woloshyn, 1995

Implementing Cognitive Strategy Instruction



Components of Enriched Writers' Workshop



Mini-Lesson Framework



Sturm (2012)

Quick Tip

Mini-lessons should be so short that students do not need a break.

Mini-Lesson: "Say More"

Mini-Lesson: Say More

Introduction and Purpose of Activity

- Start by asking, "Who in here is an author?" (*Encourage students to raise their hands or indicate in some way*)
- "The purpose of today's lesson is to talk about 'saying more' in our writing. When we say more, it means that we are writing more letters, words, and sentences in our writing. We are making our writing longer when we say more!"

© Sturm (2010)

Mini-Lesson: "Say More"

Communication Activity (modeling and guided practice)

- Ask, "How many of you like to fill the page with your writing?" (*Encourage students to raise their hands or indicate in some way*)
- Say, "Sometimes authors don't write very much at all. When we listen to an author whose writing is very short we really wish the author would *say more*." (*Show a photo with a [very](#) brief sample you've written; i.e., a single word label, phrase, or sentence*)
- Say, "Let's look at our tip sheet to get some ideas about how we can say more in our writing." (*Show the students the "Say More" tip sheet*)

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Mini-Lesson: "Say More"


- Model how to "Say More" in writing by using the short sample you used earlier in the lesson
 - Talk about the photo and the interesting content in the photo (Post a photo on the writing area—a large paper, dry erase board, SmartBoard, or chalkboard)
 - Read your written text aloud
 - Ask students, "What else could I tell in my writing?" (Offer ideas the students can choose if they struggle with sharing new ideas to add)
 - Say, "Let's add your ideas to my writing" (Model, out loud, how you would turn the students' ideas into sentences)
 - Say, "Let's read everything we have added. (Read entire sample aloud.) We really said a lot more in our writing."

© Sturm (2010)

Strategy Tip Sheet: "Say More"




Mini-Lesson Strategies, Tools, & Techniques



The Talking Stick

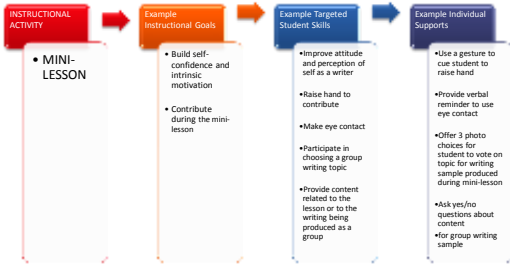
- Facilitates turn-taking during mini-lessons & author's chair
- Unintended consequence – More students initiate & the communication field equalizes!



3-Point Rating Scale

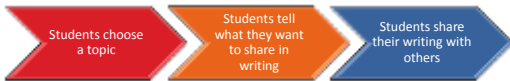
- Students use the scale to provide a response (vote) on a concept being role during the mini-lesson (e.g., eye contact)
- Provides students an opportunity to apply and reinforce a concept and supports active participation

Mini-Lesson Component



© Sturm (2012)

Independent Writing Framework



© Sturm (2012)

Basic Tools for Independent Writing



Independent Writing Component



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Quick Tip

You Can't Teach Them to Write if They Won't Write for You.

Jim Cunningham (Personal Communication, 2005)

Things We All Know About Communication Board



Author's Chair Framework

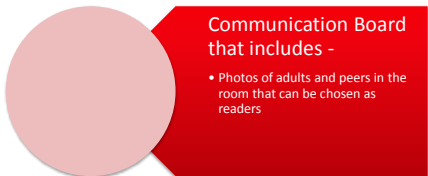


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Voice Amplification During Oral Reading

- Using a microphone is introduced during a mini-lesson on the Author's chair
- Found that students typically do not read in a "public voice"
- Consider using a lapel or hand held microphone
- Found significant improvements in intelligibility
- Positive response from students – All chose to use it

Choose A Reader



Providing Individual Supports: Adult Scaffolds and Communication and Writing Tools



Author's Toolkits



Personalized Covers -

- Topics chosen
- Photos obtained from Internet or home
- A collage is created for the cover that reflects each student's personal interests

Toolkit content & sections -

- Some contain letter tiles & letter boards
- Lesson Tip Sheets
- Communication Boards
- Photos for Topics
- Writing Products
- Some contain schedule boards

Quick Tip

Students own their toolkits!

Individual Student Tip Sheets

About the Tip Sheet:

- Each student has an individual tip sheet
- Helps any adult (or peer) know the student's core goal during a specific part of the Writers' Workshop
- Helps any adult know what he or she should do to scaffold the student
 - Goal is to provide the least amount of support then add support as needed
 - Goal is to work yourself out of a job!

Sturm (2012)

Individual Student Tip Sheet

Available at:

Sturm, J. (2012). An enriched writers' workshop for beginning writers with developmental disabilities. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 32(4), 335-360.

<http://links.lww.com/TLD/A9>

Instructor Scaffolds

Verbal and physical cues may be used to:

- Locate and manipulate materials (e.g., Authors' toolkits)
- Use communication tools
- Review and choose topic choices
- Alternate among writing tools
- Share comments with peers
- Encourage students' active participation in communication and writing

Identify Writing Tools and Accommodations for Each Student

Consider ease of access, independence, ability to produce text -

- Watch each student writer and observe for any fine motor needs that make writing difficult or result in difficulties with legibility and mechanics
- Reduce or eliminate fine motor demands by providing students with ease of access to the alphabet
- Assess candidacy for assistive software (e.g., word banks or word prediction)
- Assess candidacy for access hardware (e.g., joystick, trackball, infrared sensor) targeting ease and independence
- Assess candidacy for individual scaffolds (e.g., dry erase boards)

Quick Tip

Students do not need to demonstrate letter recognition or letter name skills to use the alphabet to write.

Conventional, Adapted, and Alternative Writing Tools

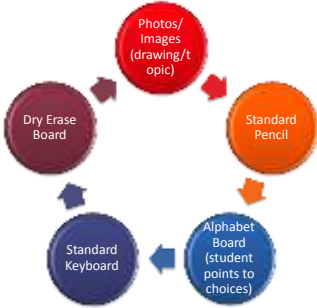
Examples:

- Photos/images
- Standard pencil
- Alphabet board or alphabet tiles
- Standard, alternate, or enlarged keyboards
- Assistive software (e.g., word banks, word prediction, organizational tools)
- Dry erase board (offered single or two-word combinations)
- AAC device and no-tech AAC books
- Access hardware (e.g., joystick, trackball, infrared sensor)
- Alternative pencils (Center for Literacy & Disability Studies)
 - Color encoded eye-gaze frame
 - Print alphabet flipcharts

Quick Tip

Allow students to alternate conventional, adapted, and alternative writing tools within and across sessions.

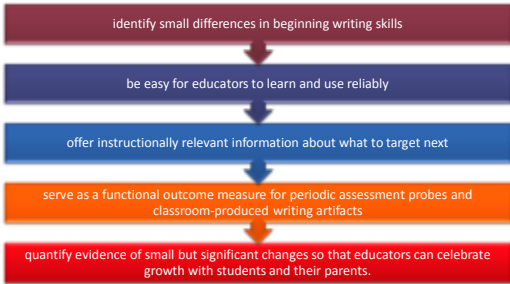
Conventional, Adapted, and Alternative Writing Tools: An Emergent Writer



Conventional, Adapted, and Alternative Writing Tools: A Conventional Writer



Five Purposes for the Writing Quantity and Quality Outcome Measures – They will:



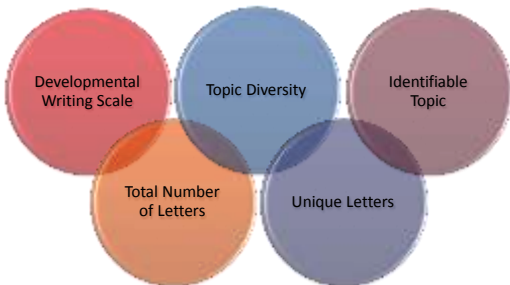
Sturm, Call, Nelson, & Staskowski, 2012

Outcome Measures as a Tool for Assessing Teacher Efficacy

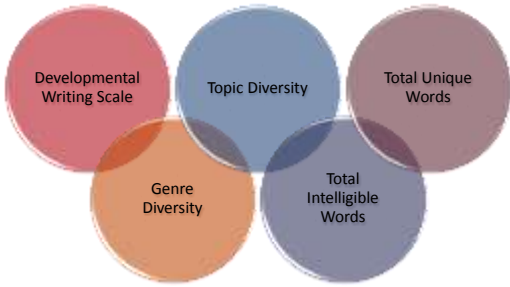
Evaluations must be based on multiple reliable measures and indicators that support valid measurement of special education teacher effectiveness

Excerpt from the CEC Position on Teacher Evaluation

Measures for Emergent Beginning Writers



Measures for Conventional Beginning Writers



FirstAuthor Writing Measures

Available at:

firstauthoronline.com

Beginning Writer Survey of Writing Attitude and Self-Efficacy (Sturm, 2007)

1. I like to write.
2. I like people to read what I've written.
3. It is easy for me to write.
4. When I write, people understand what I'm saying.
5. When I write, it is easy for me to get started with my writing.
6. When I write, I think I am a good writer.
7. When I write, it is easy for me to write my ideas.



I REALLY don't.



I don't know.



I REALLY do.

Communication Measures

Communication Measures	Definition
Number of Prompted Questions or Comments	The number of comments or questions produced during a Writer's Workshop communication event following a verbal prompt.
Number of Initiated Comments or Questions	The number of comments or questions produced during a Writer's Workshop communication events.
Number of On-Topic Comments or Questions	The number of on-topic comments or questions produced during a Writer's Workshop communication events.
Diversity of Comments or Questions	The number of different words produced during a Writer's Workshop communication events.

Annual Meet the Author Event

Meet the Author Event

- Posters are displayed around the room & students interact with the visitors
- A special moment booklet is given to parents/guardians
- An Author's Chair session is held – Everyone participates!
- Cake & punch is served!

Getting Ready

- Choose Best Writing to Share
- Write Author Biographies
- Create Posters of Work
- Create Special Moments Handouts



Who is invited to Meet the Author?

The list might include -

- Intermediate School District Administrators
- High School Administrators
- Families & Guardians
- Other Classrooms
- CMU Faculty
- SLP Graduate
- Students

(Summarized by Hedricks, Katims, & Carr, 1999)

The Poster Session

- Author Biography
- Author
- Workshop Photos
- Writing Topics

Student Outcome Booklets

The booklet includes -

- Letter to Parents
 - About Meet the Author Day & the Writer’s Workshop
- My Writing
 - A set of the best samples
- Special Moments
 - A summary of the weekly special moments for each student
 - E.g., During author’s chair, Shalynne clearly verbalized “any questions or comments” after her writing was read.
- My Progress
 - Summary tables of the writing measures

(Summarized by Hedricks, Katims, & Carr, 1999)

Recognize Possibility – The Future

We’ve been told that we should be teaching writing based on the general education curriculum and to show progress in our students, but we didn’t have any way to do it. Up until this year, my students, who are high school age, have been copying and tracing and writing their names and addresses. This Enriched Writers’ Workshop approach gave me a way to provide differentiated writing instruction to our students and allows them to be authors and to share their writing with us and with their peers.

Paraphrased comments from a special educator who works with students with moderate intellectual developmental disabilities

Principles for Working on Writing & Communication with Students with DD

Attitudes and Beliefs

- Believe that each student is an author who has something to communicate
- Eliminate pre-requisites for membership in the writing community

Learning Environment

- Set up a social interactive learning environment
- Challenge each student and keep them safe
- Offer choices across the learning environment to foster intrinsic motivation and respect student choices
- Communicate in ways that inspire students to do more
- Celebrate all accomplishments, big and small!

Student Centered

- Provide cognitive strategies, scaffolds, and tools that support individual success
- Identify abilities and needs
- Find out what each student loves

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