

The Writing Toolkit for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Micro-level Writing

Resource Packet



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Handwriting Reflection

Review the information on handwriting provided in the Appendix, then use the questions listed below to prompt reflection about the handwriting practices currently implemented in your classroom/school/district. What next steps can you take to improve handwriting instruction?

Reflection Questions:

- Is handwriting currently taught in grades K-3?
- Is there a consistent and pervasive understanding of the importance of handwriting as it relates to the development and improvement of writing skills?
- How much time is allocated to handwriting instruction?
- Is there appropriate professional development in the teaching of handwriting?
- Does our district/LEA include handwriting in its written ELA curriculum?
- How do Classroom teachers and ESL teachers collaborate to bring consistency to handwriting instruction?

Keyboarding Reflection

Review the information on keyboarding provided in the Appendix, then use the questions listed below to prompt reflection about the keyboarding practices currently implemented in your classroom/school/district. What next steps can you take to improve keyboarding instruction?

Reflection Questions:

- When is keyboarding introduced?
- Who provides direct instruction in keyboarding and how do classroom teachers support efficient keyboarding skills in the classroom? Are all teachers trained in teaching/supporting keyboarding skills?
- Is keyboarding instruction provided in addition to handwriting instruction?

Spelling Reflection

Review the information on spelling provided in the Appendix, then use the questions listed below to prompt reflection about how spelling instruction is currently implemented in your classroom/school/district. What next steps can you take to improve spelling instruction?

Reflection Questions:

- How is spelling addressed in your ELA written curriculum?
- Is there a consistent and pervasive understanding of the impact of poor spelling on writing?
- Is spelling instruction aligned to reading instruction and aligned to the most recent evidence on the teaching of spelling?
- Is spelling explicitly and directly taught?
- Is spelling instruction aligned to phonemic patterns and rules?

Sentence Writing Adjectives

Identify: Underline the adjectives in the following sentences. (Do not include articles).

1. The hungry green alligator slithered up the muddy bank. (3)
2. On the shore the young girl was scared but brave. (3)
3. The frightened girl called to her father in a loud voice. (3)

Check your work!

Expand: Add at least 3 adjectives to each sentence to make it more descriptive.

1. The children and their leader took vans to a campground.

2. Over a campfire the children roasted hotdogs and sang songs.

Share: Choose #1 or #2 to share with your group.

Combine: Combine the following short sentences into one longer sentence.

1. My grandfather told jokes at the table. He is friendly. His jokes were funny.

2. My sisters and I listened to the jokes and ate snacks. My sisters were hungry. The snacks were sweet.

Check your work!

Create: Write your own sentences.

1. Write a sentence using these adjectives: happy, energetic

2. Write a sentence with at least two of your own adjectives in it.

Sentence Writing Prepositions

Identify: Put prepositional phrases in parentheses and underline their prepositions.

1. In the middle of World War II, F.D.R. passed away in Warm Springs, Georgia. (3)
2. Of all the first ladies, Eleanor Roosevelt and Michelle Obama are the tallest at 5'11". (2)
3. The Montagues and Capulets are engaged in a long-standing feud until the final scene of the play. (3)

Check your work!

Expand: Add at least 2 prepositional phrases to each sentence to make it more descriptive.

1. We got all of our chores done.

2. The Grinch travels to Whoville to destroy Christmas.

Share: Choose #1 or #2 to share with your group.

Combine: Combine the following short sentences into one longer sentence.

1. Huck Finn makes a long journey. He does this on the Mississippi. He travels with Jim.

2. Lady Macbeth enters the room. She does this with a candle in her hand. She is in a trance. This occurs in Act 5, scene i.

Check your work!

Create: Write your own sentences.

1. Write a sentence using these prepositional phrases: in the novel, on the throne.

2. Write a sentence with at least two of your own prepositional phrases in it.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary Instructional Routine

- Step 1: Introduce the word
- Step 2: Introduce the word's meaning
- Step 3: Illustrate the word with examples
- Step 4: Check students' understanding
 - Ask deep processing questions
 - Have students discern between examples and non-examples
 - Have students generate their own examples
 - Have students generate a sentence (using a sentence starter)

*See *Anita Archer's* Dynamic Vocabulary Instruction:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fr7yRYegjb8>

CONCEPT MAP

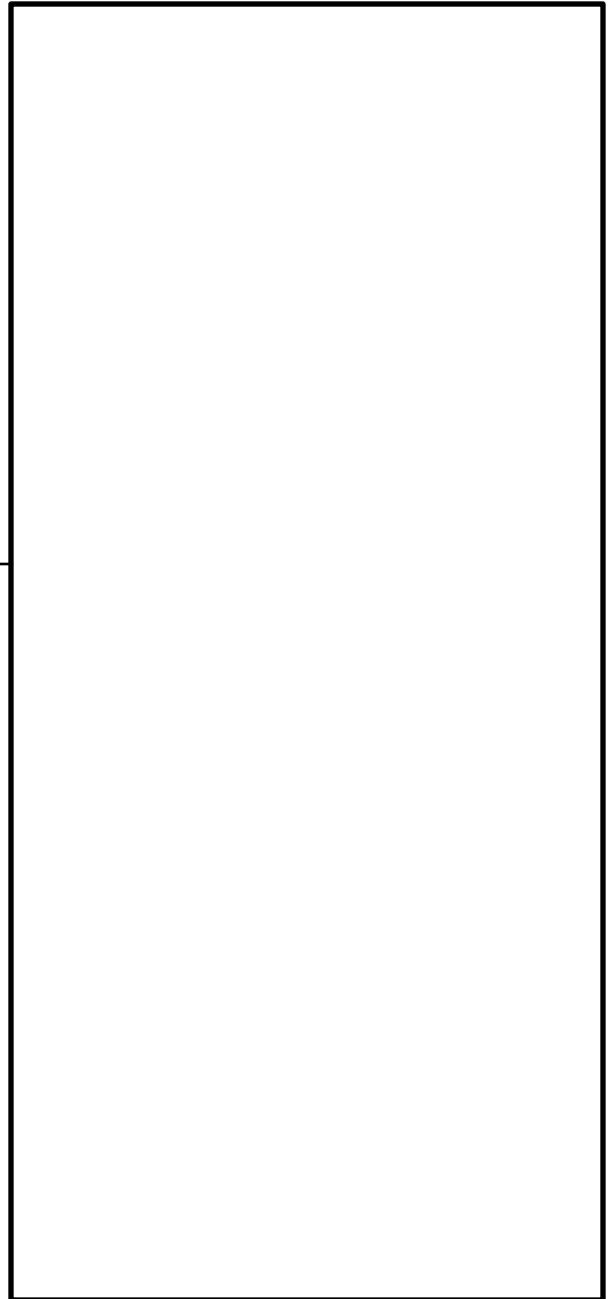
10

Name: _____

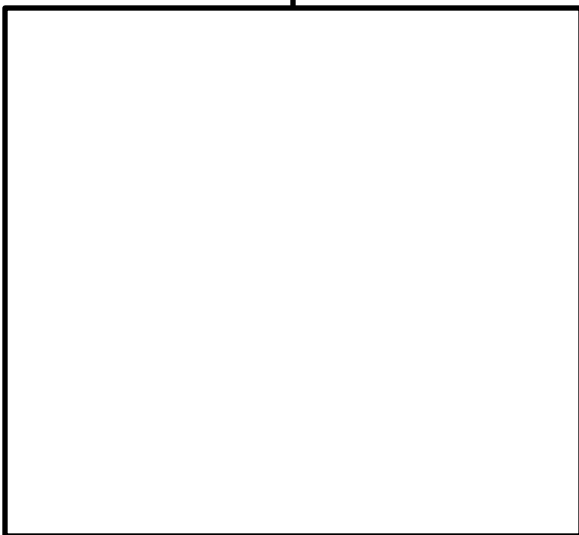
What is it?



What is it like?



Word:



What are some examples?

Concept Map

Name: _____

Word

What is it?

What is it like?

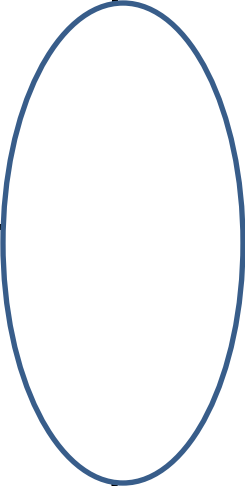
What are some examples?

<div data-bbox="287 253 489 334">Definition</div>	<div data-bbox="911 253 1146 320">Characteristics</div>
<div data-bbox="121 938 408 996">Examples/Synonyms</div>	<div data-bbox="1048 917 1298 979">Nonexamples</div>

Frayer Model

Name: _____

<u>Definition</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
<u>Examples</u>	<u>Non-examples</u>



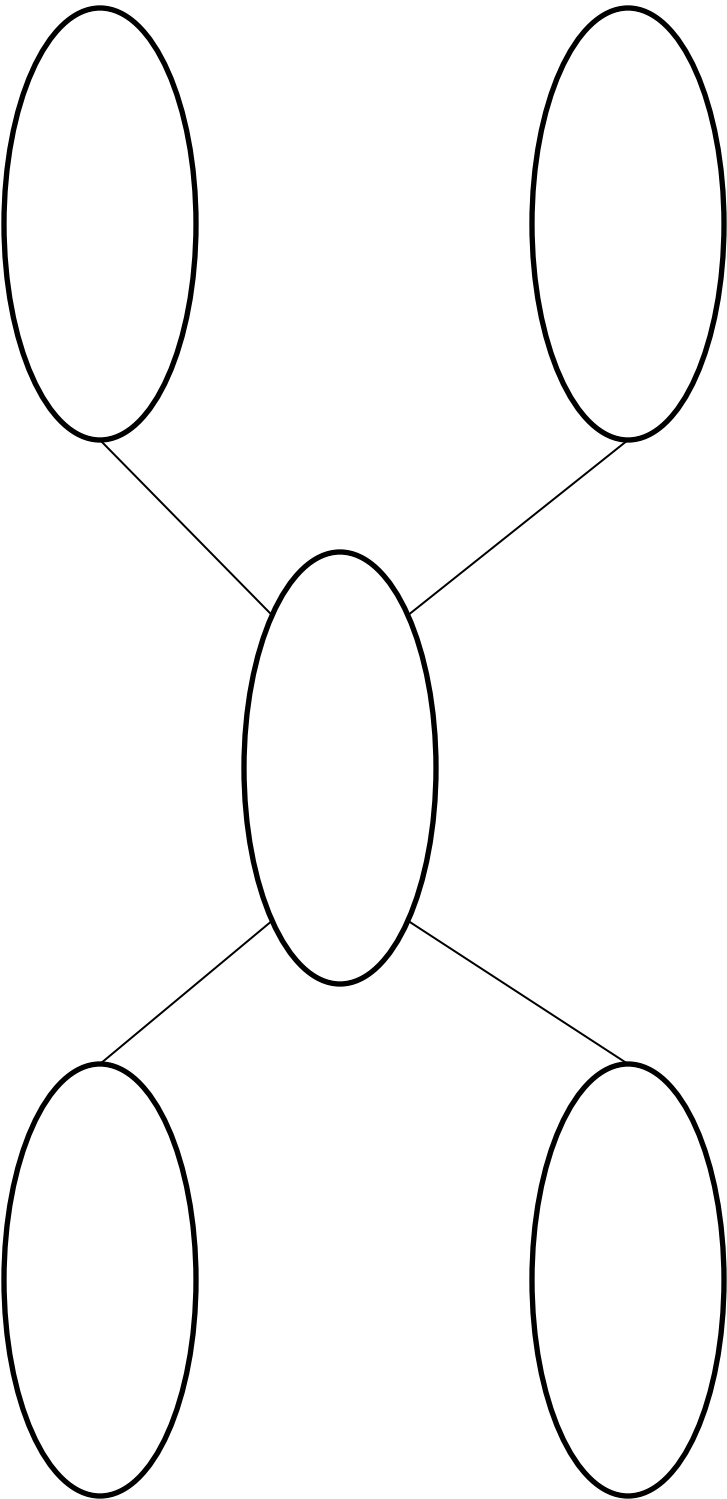
4 Square

Name: _____

<u>Word</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<u>Examples</u>	<u>Non-examples</u>

Semantic Web

Name: _____



VOCABULARY LOG

16

Name: _____

Word and Definition:

Synonyms:

Antonyms:

Examples:

Non-Examples:

Other Members of Word Family:

Related Words:

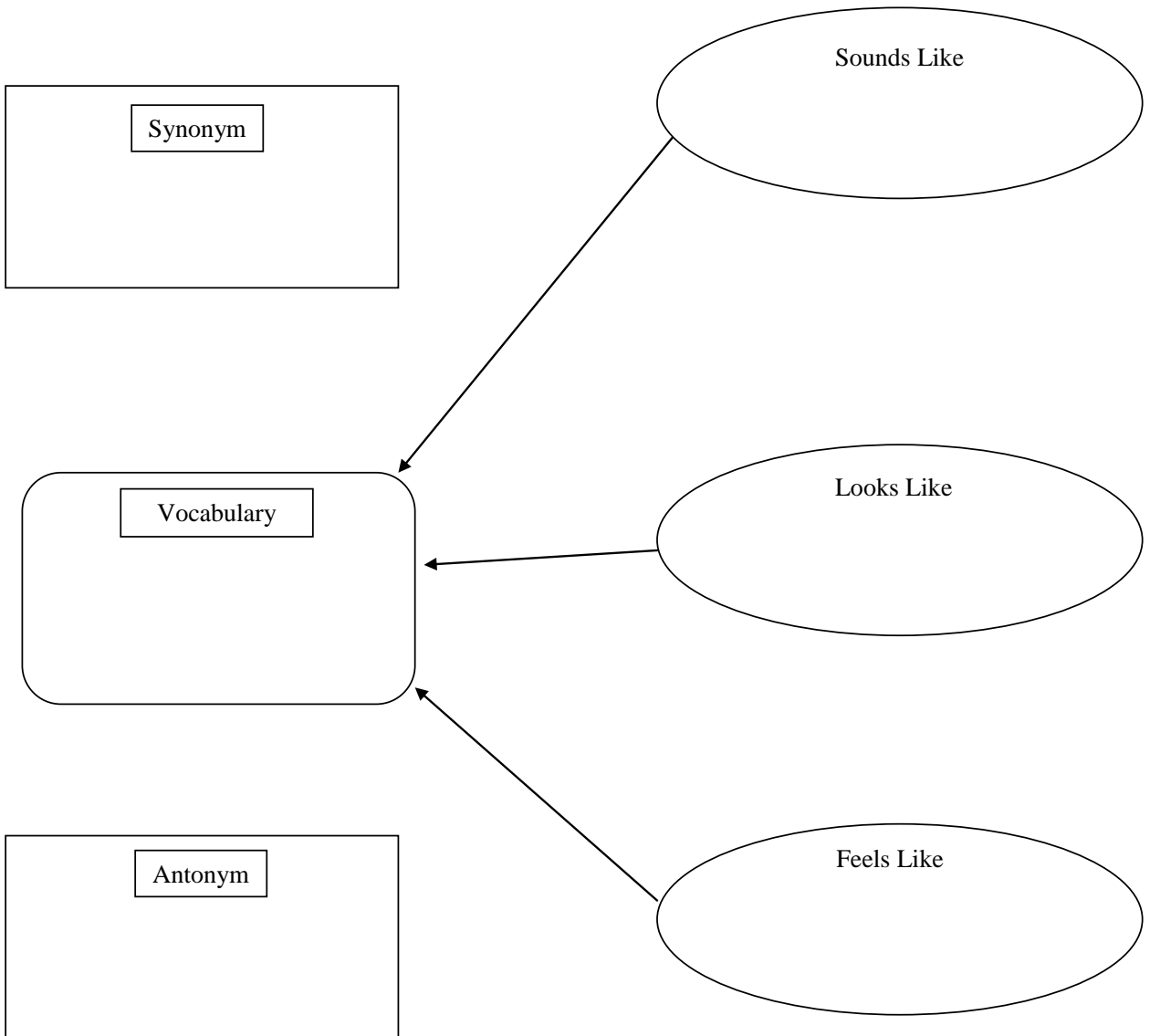
Sentence:

Illustration:

VOCABULARY LOG

Name: _____

Date: _____ 17



Draw a picture to show what your word means.

Write the definition of the word.

Word Categories

Naming Words

Naming Words

Naming Words

Word Categories

Action Words

Action Words

Action Words

Word Categories

Describing Words

Describing Words

Describing Words

Word Categories

Animals

Clothes

Color

Word Categories

Food

Groups of
People or Animals

How People Feel

Word Categories

How Something

Feels

How Things Look

Noises and Sounds

Word Categories

People

People's Actions

People's Appearance

Word Categories

Places for People,
Animals and Things

Places People Live

Rooms and Furniture

Word Categories

Shapes

Sports and Games

Things We Use

Word Categories

Time

Transportation

Trees and Plants

Word Categories

Trouble and Safety

Weather

Your Body

Word Categories

Word Categories

Sample Organizational Frames

A Collection of Writing Frames

1

Summary - Informational Text

Chapter: _____ Topic: _____

In this section of the chapter, a number of critical points were made about ...

First, the authors pointed out that...

This was important because...

Next, the authors mentioned that...

Furthermore, they indicated...

This was critical because...

Finally, the authors suggested that...

2

Summary - Informational Text – Example

- **Chapter:** *Drifting Continents*
- **Topic:** *Wegener's Theory*
- In this section of the chapter, a number of critical points were made about *Alfred Wegener's theory of continental drift*. First, the authors pointed out that *Wegener believed that all the continents were once joined together in a single landmass that drifted apart forming the continents of today*. This was important because *it explained why the outline of the continents as they are today fit together*. Next, the authors mentioned that *Wegener argued that there were many pieces of evidence supporting his theory of continental drift*. Furthermore, they indicated that *Wegener used evidence of similar landforms and fossils on different continents to prove his theory*. This was critical because *other scientists could validate this evidence*. Finally, the authors suggested that *despite this evidence, other scientists did not accept Wegener's theory because he could not explain the force that pushes and pulls the continent*.

3

Summary – Narrative Frame

The title of this story was

The setting of the story was

..... was the main character of the story.

In the story, we learned that was

His/her main problem/conflict/goal was ...

At first, ... tried to resolve this problem/conflict/goal by ...

Later, he/she tried to resolve the problem/conflict/goal by...

In the end, the following happened: ...

4

Summary – Narrative Example

The title of this story was *My Summer Vacation*. The setting of the story was *a cattle ranch in Texas during summer vacation*. *Wallace* was the main character of the story. We learned that *Wallace was a young city boy who was spending his summer with the crew on the ranch*. His main problem was *that he had to learn all of the skills of a wrangler such as how to move the cattle from one location to another and use a lasso properly*. At first, *Wallace* tried to resolve this problem by *carefully observing the ranch hands and mimicking their behaviors*. Later, he tried to resolve the problem by *asking the other wranglers, the ranch manager, and even the cook to teach him ranch skills*. In the end, the following happened: *Wallace stopped a stampede*.

5

Summary - Video

Although I already knew that ...
I learned some new facts from the video titled ...
I learned ...
I also discovered that...
Another fact I learned was ...
However, the most important/interesting thing I became aware of was...

6

Compare and Contrast

... and ... are similar in a number of ways.

First, they both.....

Another critical similarity is ...

An equally important similarity is ...

Finally, they ...

The differences between ... and ... are also obvious.

The most important difference is ...

In addition, they are ...

In the final analysis, ... differs from ... in two major ways: ...

7

Compare and Contrast - Example

Narrative and informative written products are similar in a number of ways. First, they both have an author intent on sharing his/her ideas. Another critical similarity is the goal of informative and narrative writing: to communicate to a reader or group of readers. An equally important similarity is that both genre' utilize the words, mechanics, and grammar of the author's language. Finally, both are read on a daily basis across the world.

The differences between *narrative* and *informative written products* are also obvious. The most important difference is *their purpose*. *Narratives convey a story, real or imagined, while informative products transmit information that the reader needs or is interested in learning.* In addition, they are structured differently. *The structure of a narrative is based on the elements of a story: settings, characters, the character's problems, attempts at resolving the problem, and finally its resolution. In contrast, when writing an informative product, authors organize the information into paragraphs each containing a topic and critical details.* In the final analysis, *narratives differ from informative text in two major ways: content and structure.*

8

Compare and Contrast

... and ... are the same in several ways .
 First of all, ... and ... are both
 Likewise, they are
 In the same way, they are
 Therefore, ... and ... have much in common.

... and ... are different in several ways.
 First of all, ... is/arewhile ... is/are ...
 Moreover, ... are/is ... while ... is/are ...
 Another way that they are differ is ...

9

Compare and Contrast

Although...and...are different..., they are alike in
 some interesting ways.
 For example, they both...
 They are also similar in
 The...is the same as...
 The ...resembles...
 Finally they both...

10

Explanation

There are differing explanations as to why (how, what, when)...

One explanation is that....

The evidence for this is ...

An alternative explanation is...

The basis of this explanation is ...

Of these possible explanations, I think the most likely is ...

11

Explanation

There are a number of reasons why

The most important reason is...

Another reason is ...

A further reason is ...

So you can see why...

12

Explanation

There are differing explanations as to why...

One explanation for this is...

The evidence for this is ...

An alternative explanation is ...

The explanation is based on...

Of the alternative explanations, I think the most likely is...

13

Process

To ..., you need to follow these basic steps.

First, you need to ...

Next ...

Then...

When you finish, you should have

14

Argument

Though not everybody would agree, I want to argue that...

I have several reasons for arguing this point of view.

My first reason is ...

A further reason is...

Furthermore...

Therefore, although some people might argue that ...

I have shown that ...

15

Process

To ..., you need to follow these basic steps.

First, you need to ...

Next ...

Then...

When you finish, you should have

16

Argument

There is a lot of discussion about whether...

The people who agree with this idea claim that...

A further point they make is ...

However, there are also strong arguments against this point of view.

People with the opposing view believe that...

They say that...

Furthermore, they claim that...

After examining the different points of view and the evidence for them, I think... because...

17

Opinion

I think that ...

I feel this way because ...

Another reason I feel this way is...

Most importantly, I think ...

For these reasons, I believe that ...

18

Description

When describing ..., the word that comes to mind is ...

One reason is ...

Another reason is ...

Finally, ... is ... because ...

Thus, ... is the best description of ...

19

Character Analysis

A significant personality trait of ... in ... is that he/she was ...

The first incident where (*or* way that) the character demonstrates this trait was...

... also shows this trait when he/she...

Finally, ...Shows that he/she is ... when ...

It is clear that this characteristic makes ... a more (interesting, intriguing, compelling, amusing) character in ...

20

Character Analysis

The character ... in ... can best be described as ...

This is evident when ...

... also shows this trait when he/she...

Further, his/her...is evident when ...

Thus, ... is a good way to describe ...

21

Problem-Solution

In this problem, we were asked to figure out....

Some information was already given including ... and ...

When creating a plan to solve this problem, I decided to follow a number of steps.

First, I....

Next, I...

Then, I ...

Finally, I ...

After following these steps, I determined that the answer was ...

To check this answer, I ...

Based on my verification of the answer, I am quite certain that it is accurate.

22

Exit Ticket

Name:

Directions: Complete _____ of these statements.

1. Today I learned...
2. I was surprised by...
3. The most useful thing I will take from this lesson is...
4. One thing I am not sure about is....
5. The main thing I want to find out more about is....
6. After this session, I feel...
7. I might have gotten more from this lesson if....

Appendix

APPENDIX I: TRANSCRIPTION SKILLS

Recommendation 1: Handwriting

Research indicates that students in grades K-3 benefit from direct and explicit handwriting instruction. Steve Graham (2009-2010, Winter) cites a considerable body of work indicating “that, done right, early handwriting instruction improves students’ writing. Not just its legibility, but its quantity and quality” (p. 20). Virginia Berninger (2012) concurs, noting two important reasons for handwriting instruction: “learning to form letters by hand improves perception of letters and contributes to better reading and spelling” and “automatic letter writing promotes better composing—both amount written and quality of writing” (p. 31). Berninger also notes that “handwriting is not merely a motor skill; it is also a written language skill,” comprised of working memory, naming letters, planning to form letters, incoming visual and touch sensory information, and the orthographic loop, which she explains as “the integration of letters and written words in the mind’s eye with the sequential hand and finger movements during writing” (p. 28).

Students who struggle with handwriting must devote working memory to the act of forming letters, a lower-level cognitive skill, leaving them with less working memory to devote to higher-level cognitive tasks, such as sentence, paragraph, and idea development. In fact, even when these students equal or surpass their classmates intellectually, laborious handwriting prevents them from developing their ideas as efficiently and thoroughly as those same classmates.

K-3 instructors should provide handwriting instruction 3-5 times each week for a total of 50-100 minutes of weekly instructional time devoted to learning to write both legibly and quickly. Graham (2009-2010, Winter) also found that only 12% of teachers polled felt they received adequate training in handwriting instruction.

Recommendation: In short, elementary students need regular handwriting instruction, and instructors need adequate training in handwriting to teach their students to form letters legibly and quickly.

References:

- Berninger, Virginia. (2012). Strengthening the mind’s eye. *Principal*, 91, 28-31.
- Graham, Steve. (2009-2010, Winter). Want to improve children’s writing? Don’t neglect their handwriting. *American Educator*. 20-40.

APPENDIX I: TRANSCRIPTION SKILLS

Recommendation 2: Keyboarding

With the nation-wide commitment to expanding students' use of technology, keyboarding is an essential skill. Particularly in middle and high school, but even in the elementary grades, students are required to submit work that has been typed on a word processor. As schools add technology to their programs, students must become proficient in keyboarding. Those who "hunt and peck" use valuable working memory just to find the letters on the keyboard; it is essential that they instead devote this working memory to developing and capturing their ideas in well-constructed sentences, paragraphs and essays. Steve Graham et al. (2012) found that "teaching text transcription skills [including keyboarding] improved the quality of writing produced by students in Grades 1-3..." (p. 889).

Students should develop keyboarding competency when they begin composing and submitting written work on the computer. A trained instructor providing direct and explicit instruction and armed with a research-based instructional method is best suited to develop this competency in students.

It is important to note that keyboarding instruction should be provided in addition to rather than instead of handwriting instruction.

Recommendation: In short, elementary students need keyboarding instruction, and instructors need adequate training in keyboarding to teach their students to type efficiently.

Reference:

Graham, S., Kiuahara, S., McKeown, D., and Harris, K. (2012). A Meta-analysis of writing instruction for students in the elementary grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 104 (4), 879-896.

APPENDIX I: TRANSCRIPTION SKILLS

Recommendation 3: Spelling

Research indicates that spelling is an essential language skill and that students need both direct and explicit spelling instruction. A successful spelling program, which should include a scope and sequence and move from the simple to the complex, includes the following key ingredients: “explicit instruction in phoneme-grapheme correspondences, phonemic patterns in letter sequences or syllables, rules for joining syllables or adding morphemes, elements of morpheme preservation in word formation, and strategies for encoding irregular words” (Reed, 2012, p.24). Additionally, despite commonly held misconceptions about the value of whole word rote memorization, words should instead be selected based on students’ developing understanding of word structure. Practice should be both “repeated and cumulative” (p. 24).

In their meta-analysis of writing instruction for elementary students, Steve Graham et al. (2012), found that direct and explicit spelling instruction [as well as the other transcription skills of handwriting and keyboarding] improved students’ writing significantly. Writers who must devote too much thought to spelling leave too little working memory for the higher level composition skills, including sentence and paragraph writing and idea generation and organization. Louisa Moats (2005-2006) adds that “learning to spell and learning to read rely on much of the same underlying knowledge” (p. 12) and that good spelling instruction improves reading as well.

Unfortunately, some schools have removed spelling instruction from their curricula, arguing that access to a spelling checker eliminates the need for such instruction. Moats (citing Montgomery, Karlan, and Coutinho in a 2001 study) reminds us that spelling checkers do not catch all errors (neglecting to discern between homophones, for example) and that they “identify the target word from misspellings of students with learning disabilities only 53 percent of the time” (p. 12). Students should receive 15-20 minutes daily or 30 minutes thrice each week in direct, explicit spelling instruction (p. 42).

Recommendation:

In short, elementary students need spelling instruction, preferably taught simultaneously with reading instruction, and instructors need adequate training in spelling instruction to teach their students appropriately.

References:

Graham, S., Kiuahara, S., McKeown, D., and Harris, K. A Meta-analysis of writing instruction for students in the elementary grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 104 (4), 879-896.
 Moats, L (2005-2006, Winter). How spelling supports reading. *American Educator*.
 Reed, D. (2012). *Why teach spelling?* Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.