Part 1: Writing Foundations: Setting the Stage for Excellence

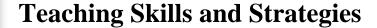
Anita L. Archer, Ph.D.

Archerteach@aol.com

1

Topics

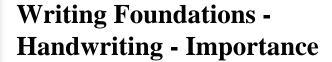
- Teaching Skills and Strategies
- Writing Foundations
 - Handwriting
 - Letter Formation
 - Handwriting Fluency
 - Spelling
 - Spelling Regular Words
 - Spelling Irregular Words
 - Spelling rules
 - Sentences
 - Sentence Expansion
 - Sentence Combining
 - Punctuation and Capitalization Rules



- Emerging writers need:
 - Explicit instruction on writing skills and strategies
 - Opportunities to respond in lessons
 - Positive, corrective feedback on performance

Teaching Skills and Strategies

- ■Model I do it.
- ■Prompt We do it.
- ■Check You do it.



- "Children who experience difficulty mastering this skill may avoid writing and develop a mindset that they cannot write, leading to arrested writing development." (Graham, Harris, & Fink, 2000)
- If students have to struggle to remember letter forms, their ability to express themselves suffers.
 Handwriting must be automatic. (Graham, 2007)

Writing Foundations - Handwriting - Importance

- Fluent, accurate letter formation and spelling are associated with students' production of longer and better-organized compositions. (Berninger, Vaughan, Abbott, Abbott, Brooks, Rogan, Reed, & Graham, S., 1997)
- Measures of handwriting speed among elementary students are good predictors of quality and quantity of written products in middle school. (Peverly, 2007)
- Students benefit from explicit instruction on how to form and fluently write letters of alphabet.

Accuracy PLUS Fluency



Example 1)

Introduction of letter form

I do it.

- · Model the letter formation.
- Stress orientation to the lines. (Hair line. Belt line. Foot line.)
- Model letter formation a number of times. Use verbal prompts.

Watch me make a lower case p. I start at the belt line. Touch down. Touch around. Watch again. Touch down. Touch around. Say it as I write a lower case p. Touch down. Touch around.

7

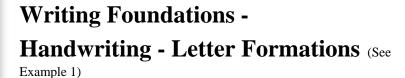
Writing Foundations Handwriting - Letter Formations (See Example 1)

We do it.

- Guide students in forming the letter using verbal prompts.
 - ("Touch down. Touch around.")
- Monitor the students letter formation.

You do it.

- Have students continue writing the letter as they say the prompt OR the letter sound.
- Continue until the letters are consistently formed correctly.



- Carefully monitor handwriting practice.
- Provide feedback.
 - Teacher feedback.
 - This is your best letter p. It starts at the beltline and goes straight down and then around.
 - Self-evaluation.
 - Model the process.
 - Watch me examine my letters. (Circle your best p.) This is my best p. It starts at the beltline, goes straight down and goes around.
 - Have students evaluate their work and circle their best formed letters.

Writing Foundations -Handwriting - Letter Formations

After mass practice to obtain accuracy, provide on-going practice that is distributive and cumulative.

- Dictate sounds. Have students write letters on slates (with permanent lines) or paper.
- Provide review worksheets with recently taught letters PLUS review letters.

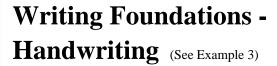
Remember: Mastery plus review = retention



- Handwriting fluency can be increased by
 - Having students write frequently.
 - Involving students in "repeated writings".
 (Graham, Harris, & Fink, 2000)

Writing Foundations Handwriting - Fluency (See Example 2)

- Repeated Writing
 - Student writes the same paragraph or material on consecutive days.
 - Materials Paragraph in reader.
 - · Adages, proverbs, sayings
 - Tries to increase the number of letters or words written in a 2 to 5 minute session.
 - Student graphs number of letters or words written.



- Stress appearance of work
- Appearance DOES make a difference in terms of grades received and response of teachers and others.
- Teach "How should your paper look?"

Writing Foundations - Spelling - Importance

- Strong relationship between spelling and writing.
- Learning to read and spell rely on much of the **same underlying knowledge** (letter-sounds, affixes,etc.)
- Spelling instruction can be designed to help children better understand key knowledge resulting in better reading. (Ehri, 2000)



- Writers who must think too hard about how to spell use valuable cognitive resources needed for higher level aspects of composition. (Singer & Bashir, 2004)
- 80% of employment applications doomed if poorly written.
- 15 to 20 minutes a day

Writing Foundations - Spelling - Regular Words

Regular Words

- 400,000 words in dictionary
- Only 13% are truly irregular (memorize)
- Focus spelling instruction on patterns that generalize.



- Letter-sound associations
- Single syllable patterns (e.g., cvc, ccvc, cvcc, cvcc, cvcc)
- Multisyllabic words
 - Inflectional endings
 - Prefixes, suffixes, common roots
- Rules for combining forms

Writing Foundations -Spelling - Regular Words

- Spelling Regular Words
- Selection of words
 - Words that will be used in writing.
 - Words taught in decoding strand of reading program.
 - Words taught in spelling program.
 Caution The word lists are the strength of most spelling programs.
 Many of the practice exercises in spelling books have debatable value.



■ Good practices noted in video

19

Writing Foundations - Spelling

- Alternatives to traditional spelling worksheets
 - Teacher dictation of words (See example 4a)
 - Partner dictation of words (See example 4b)

Writing Foundations - Spelling Rules Example 5 and 6

Introduce high frequency rules (See Example 5)
Teach rules explicitly.

- 1. Introduce rule.
- Illustrate rule with examples and non-examples. (I do it.)
- 3. Guide students in applying the rule to examples and non-examples. (We do it.)
- Check understanding using examples and nonexamples. (You do it.)

21

Writing Foundations - Spelling - Irregular Words Example 7

- Irregular words
 - Teach 3 to 5 per week
 - Focus on the most common (Moats, 2003)



- Teach students a strategy for independently studying irregular words.
- Copy, Cover, Write, Check

Writing Foundations - Spelling - Independent Writing

- Teach students how to attack the spelling of unknown words when writing.

 See Example 8.
- When monitoring students as they write, give feedback on spelling words visually (e.g., Write the word down for the student.)



Sentence Expansion Activities

- Students can learn the structure of sentences and gain "sentence sense" though sentence expansion exercises.
- Students add words or phrases to sentences that answer questions such as when, where, why, and how.

25

Writing Foundations - Sentences

Sentence-Combining Activities

- Recommended in Writing Next (Graham & Perin, 2007)
- Have positive effect on students' writing.

(Evans, Venotozzi, Bundrick, & McWilliams, 1988; Howie, 1979; Kanellas, Carifio & Dagostino, 1998; Pedersen, 1977; Saddler & Graham, 2005; Stoddard, 1982)

Writing Foundations - Sentences Example 10

Sentence-Combining Activities (Rewards Writing - Sentence Refinement published by Sopris)

- Students start with a stem sentence and combine it with one to four other sentences.
- Turn to Example 10. *Try out the following items with your partner.*

27

Writing Foundations - Sentences Example 11

Primary Sequence

- Join two or more subjects
- 2. Join two or more verbs
- 3. Join two or more predicate adjectives
- 4. Join two or more direct objects
- 5. Join two or more adjectives



Example 12

- When teaching punctuation and capitalization rules, follow the instructional format for rules.
- 1. Introduce rule.
- 2. Illustrate rule with examples and non-examples. (I do it.)
- 3. Guide students in applying the rule to examples and non-examples. (We do it.)
- 4. Check understanding using examples and non-examples. (You do it.)