

# **The Language of Writing: Creating a Writing Program that Fosters Communication, Collaboration, and Composition**

Amy Staples

Evette Edmister

Gayle Porter

Linda Burkhart

\*Some of the material shared in this presentation was developed under a contract with the Iowa Department of Education using funds made available by the United States Department of Education under IDEA. These contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the United States Department of Education [or the Iowa Department of Education], and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal [or Iowa] government.

## **Today's Agenda**

- Reflect on your writing program
- Review two complementary process models for writing;
- Share research on writing, particularly as it relates to individuals with CCN;
- Discuss a variety of writing activities that support aspects of the writing process;

## Today's Agenda Cont'd

- Share ways to support student access to the composition process;
- Talk about how one might monitor AAC use and writing development; and,
- Help participants examine their own writing program and consider how it might better support communication (both in process and the resulting written product).

## First You

- Think of a child or two with whom you work. Quickly write down what the student's writing program currently involves (across settings):

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Journal (10 min)				

- What instructional or learning goals have been prioritized ?

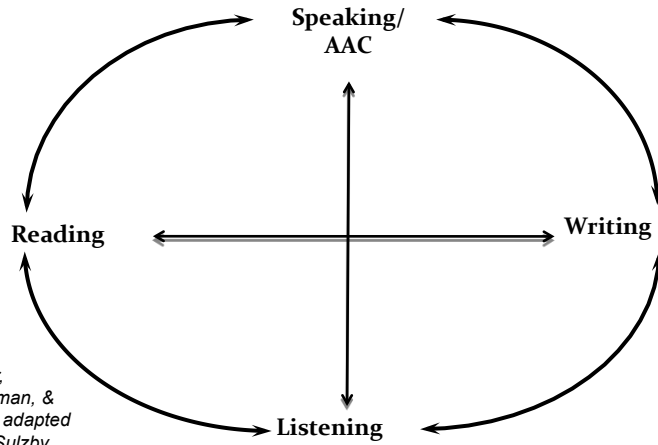
## Writing Research

- Novice writers, even young children, are capable of sophisticated thought around writing (Fitzgerald & Stamm, 1990, 1992)
- Social settings are important for writing (Boyle, 2011; Larkin, 2009; Wiseman, 2003)

## Guiding Frameworks

- Emergent literacy (Teale & Sulzby, 1986)
  - Concurrent development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking
- Cognitive process model (Flower & Hayes, 1981)
  - Recursive, hierarchical, metacognitive endeavor that requires juggling multiple constraints
- Social interactive models (Nystrand, 1986)
  - Quality is influenced by the interaction between reader, writer, and text

## A Concurrent View of Literacy and Language Development

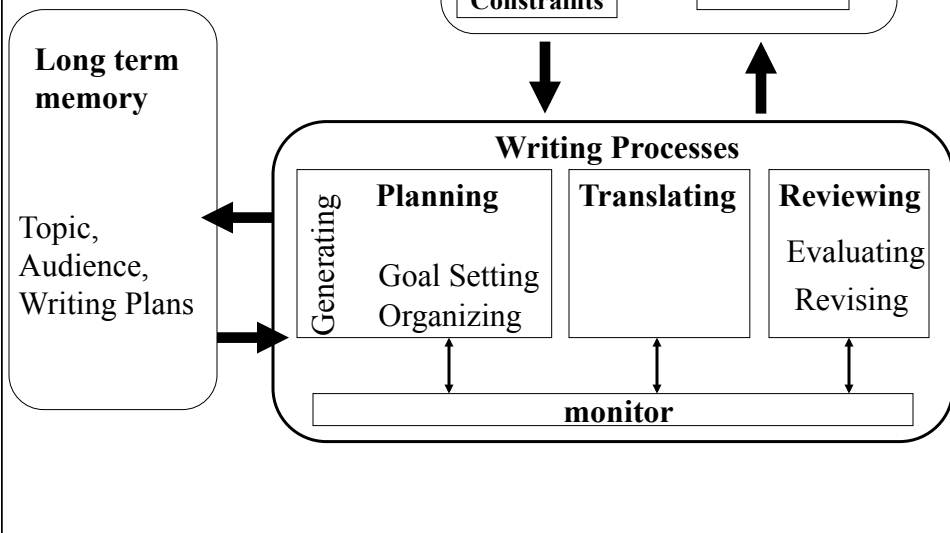


*(Koppenhaver, Coleman, Kalman, & Yoder, 1991 – adapted from Teale & Sulzby, 1989)*

7

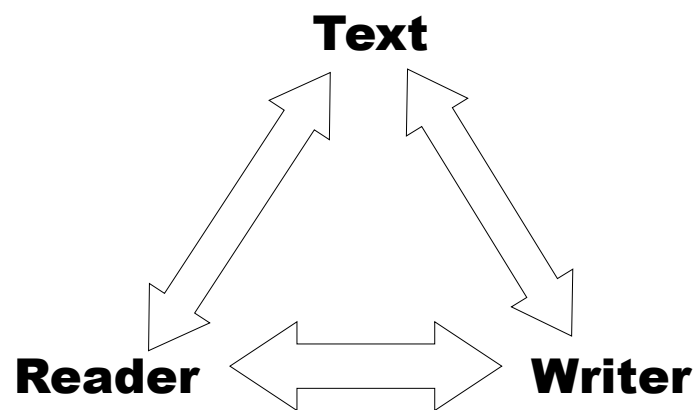
## The Writing Process

*(Hayes and Flower, 1980)*



## Social Interactive Process of Writing

*(Nystrand, 1986)*



9

## Research on Writing and Complex Communication Needs (CCN)

- Children with complex communication and/or learning challenges can grow in their literate profiles (Broderick & Kasa-Hendrickson, 2001; Erickson & Koppenhaver, 1995; Kliewer & Landis, 1999).
- Additional support of technology is sometimes required (Erickson & Koppenhaver, 2007).
- Ensuring that access, participation and supports are addressed for all students during the class day is important (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

## Research on Writing and Complex Communication Needs (CCN)

- Writing development supports reading as well as communication skills (Foley & Staples, 2003; Koppenhaver, Coleman, Kalmar, & Yoder, 1991; Teale & Sulzby, 1989; Wollak & Koppenhaver, 2011).
- Research related to Flower and Hayes cognitive process model focused more on translating and less on the overall cognitive process (Koppenhaver & Williams, 2010)
- Some preliminary evidence for both the cognitive process (Flower & Hayes, 1981) and social interaction (Nystrand, 1989) models of writing has been documented in young children with and without disabilities (Staples, Tidwell, & Huber, 2014; Staples & Edmister, 2012).

## Considerations Moving Forward

- Reframe thinking about writing – writing suggests product. Think composition so acknowledge and support the process leading to the product.
- Cognitive demands – writing is a cognitive process that requires language. How do we facilitate/support without interrupting flow?
- Interactions throughout the composing process and written products provide an opportunity to assess/monitor language and composition skills.
- Honoring the author – presume they have thoughts, experiences, and ideas to draw from in their writing.
- Authors with CCN need opportunities to learn to use a comprehensive communication system within and outside the writing process.

## Types of Writing Scenarios

### Teacher Directed

- Predictable Chart
- Writing from Topic/Photo
- Rewriting Story
- Writing New Ending
- Writing using particular structure/genre (letter, poetry, narrative, expository)
- Sentence combining
- Story critique or Book Review

### Child Constructed

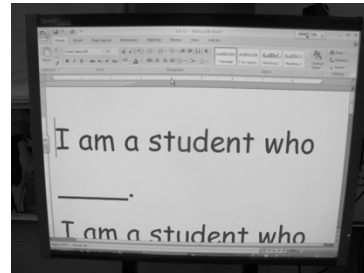
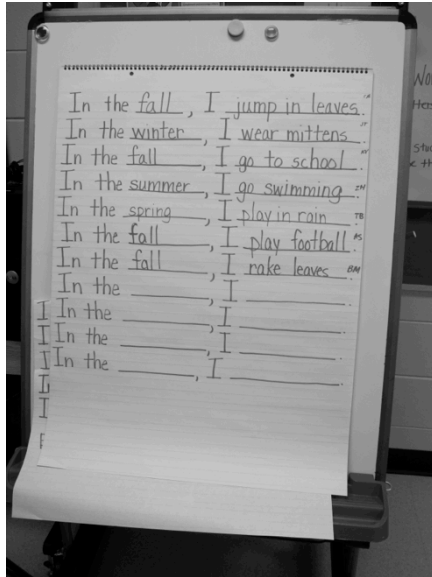
- Big Paper
- Journaling
- Paired/Collaborative Writing
- Writer's Workshop
  - Peer conferencing

13

## Teacher Directed – Predictable Chart

- Pattern for initial text
  - I like to eat \_\_\_\_\_.
  - In the winter we \_\_\_\_\_.
  - Plants need \_\_\_\_\_ to grow.
- Each child offers a sentence
- Teacher writes sentence as child dictates it, writing child's name at end of sentence in parentheses
- Child reads his/her sentence
- Children read all the sentences

## Predictable Chart



15

## Teacher Directed - Sentence Combining

- Instructional activity with research base for improving the quality and complexity of written work.
- Example:
  - He has a big dog.
  - He has a brown dog.
  - He has a big, brown dog.
- Combination types include series and conjunctions



## Child Constructed - Journaling

- Child-constructed with possibility of teacher direction
- Dialogue journal
- Topic journal

## Child Constructed - Big Paper

- Large piece of newsprint/butcher paper
- Children seated at a table or on the floor
- Range of writing implements available
- Paper is replaced with new sheets as needed
- Children typically write/draw/compose on topics of their own choosing
- Length of writing session is primarily dictated by children

## Methods of Documenting Growth

- Process
  - Methods
    - Anecdotal records
    - Digital/video of work process and product
  - Purpose
    - Note participation in own or other's process
    - Language complexity during composition interactions
- Product
  - Writing artifacts (apply scale, rubric [including language complexity])

	Content	Interaction	Conclusions
Alex April - may	Content was graphic and text Designs, letter strings, some cursive like writing, more writing in varied ways to accompany image. Speed cursive. Letters in name appear frequently in letter strings.  Added, revised. Read her work to others.	She interacted with peers, often wouldn't say what she was writing until done. For reading text that was written complete sentence some difficulty with comparatives (i.e. "Because it is so much pretty"). Directed others, commented on her work and others.	Understands composition is a message and her messages got more complex – "that's a happy birthday card."  See planning, reviews and reflects on writing i.e. isn't that pretty Serves as monitor for peers – commenting on others work Translation appropriate for age emerging with graphics and letters.

## Adapted Emergent Writing Stages

Stage	Description
0.5	One or two light marks or dots on a page Alt. Pencil- 1-3 letters selected
1	Randomly placed scribble Alt pencil- repeats letters in alphabetical order (does not have to include each letter sequentially)
2	Left to right scribbling Alt pencil- repeated letters but not always in ABC order
3	Mock letters- can be conventional shapes or personal shapes
4	Strings of letters Alt. Pencil- strings of letters (very few repeats)
5	Groups of letters Alt pencil (must be sure child has option to choose space)
6	Labeling pictures with one (usually first) letter sound of objects name. Alt pencil- single letters with spaces representing sound of word student is spelling
7	Environmental Print- writes words (mostly spelled correctly that the student sees in his environment (often names but could also be words on word wall, engaging words to student. i.e. <u>Pacman</u> )
8	Letter-Word representation: uses first letter of a word to represent entire word.

## Instructional Considerations and Conclusions

## Promote Independence without Stifling Productivity

- Reframe thinking about writing – writing suggests product. Think composition and acknowledge and support the process leading to the product.
- Be mindful of cognitive processes (in head) and social aspect of readers and writers around the text to improve quality of text
- Cognitive demands – writing is a cognitive process. How do we facilitate/support without interrupting flow?
- Interactions throughout the writing process and written products provide an opportunity to assess/monitor language and composition skills.
- Use assessment to prioritize instructional efforts

## Promote Independence without Stifling Productivity

- Honoring the author – presume they have thoughts, experiences, and ideas to draw from in their writing.
- Authors with CCN need opportunities to learn to use a comprehensive communication system within and outside the writing process.

## References

- Boyle, M. C. (2011). The three hags and Pocahontas: How collaboration develops early years writing skills. *Literacy, 45*, 10-18. doi:10.1111/j.1741-4369.2011.00576.x
- Broderick, A. A., & Kasa-Hendrickson, C. (2001). SAY JUST ONE WORD AT FIRST: The Emergence of Reliable Speech in a Student Labeled With Autism. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 26*(1), 13-24.
- Division for Early Childhood /National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). *Early childhood inclusion: A joint position statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute.
- Erickson, K. A., & Koppenhaver, D. A. (1995). Developing a literacy program for children with severe disabilities. *Reading Teacher, 48*, 676-684.
- Erickson, K. A., & Koppenhaver, D. A. (2007). *Children with disabilities: Reading and writing the Four-Blocks® way*. Greensboro, NC: Carson-Dellosa.

- Fitzgerald, J., & Stamm, C. (1990). Effects of group conferences on first graders' revision in writing. *Written Communication, 7*(1), 96-135.
- Fitzgerald, J., & Stamm, C. (1992). Variation in writing conference influence on revision: Two cases. *Journal of Literacy Research, 24*(1), 21-50.
- Flower, L. & Hayes, J. R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication, 32*(4), 365-387.
- Foley, B., & Staples, A. (2003). Developing augmentative and alternative communication and literacy interventions for adults with autism in a supported employment setting. *Topics in Language Disorders, 23*(4), 325-343.
- Koppenhaver, D. A., Coleman, P., Kalman, S., & Yoder, D. E. (1991). The implications of emergent literacy research for children with developmental disabilities. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 1*, 38-44.

- Koppenhaver, D. K., & Williams, A. (2010). A conceptual review of writing research in augmentative and alternative communication. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 26(3), 158–176.
- Kliever & Landis, 1999 Kliever, C., & Landis, D. (1999). Individualizing literacy instruction for young children with moderate to severe disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 66, 85-102.
- Larkin, S. (2009). Socially mediated metacognition and learning to write. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 4, 149-159. doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2009.09.003
- Matthews, J. (1999). *The art of childhood and adolescence: The construction of meaning*. London, England: Falmer.
- Nystrand, M. (1986). *The structure of written communication: Studies in reciprocity between writers and readers*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.
- Nystrand, M. (1989). A social-interactive model of writing. *Written Communication*, 6, 66–85.

- Staples, A, & Edmister, E. (2012). Evidence of two theoretical models observed in young children with disabilities who are beginning to learn to write. *Topics in Language Disorders*. 32(4), p. 319-334.
- Teale, W. H., & Sulzby, E. (1989). Emerging literacy: New perspectives. In D. S. Strickland & L. M. Morrow (Eds.), *Emerging literacy: Young children learn to read and write* (pp. 1-15). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Wiseman, A. M. (2003). Collaboration, initiation, and rejection: The social construction of stories in a kindergarten class. *The Reading Teacher*, 802-810.
- Wollak, B. A., & Koppenhaver, D. A. (2011). Developing technology-supported, evidence-based writing instruction for adolescents with significant writing disabilities. *Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits*, 7(1), 1–23.