

**An Introduction
to Writing Instruction
for Secondary Students**

Objectives

Participants will:

- **Discuss components of the writing process**
- **Describe characteristics of struggling and effective writers**
- **Describe strategies for the planning, drafting, revising, and editing stages of the writing process**
- **Discuss techniques that can be implemented in classrooms to teach writing**

TEKS-pectations for Writing: Grades 6-12

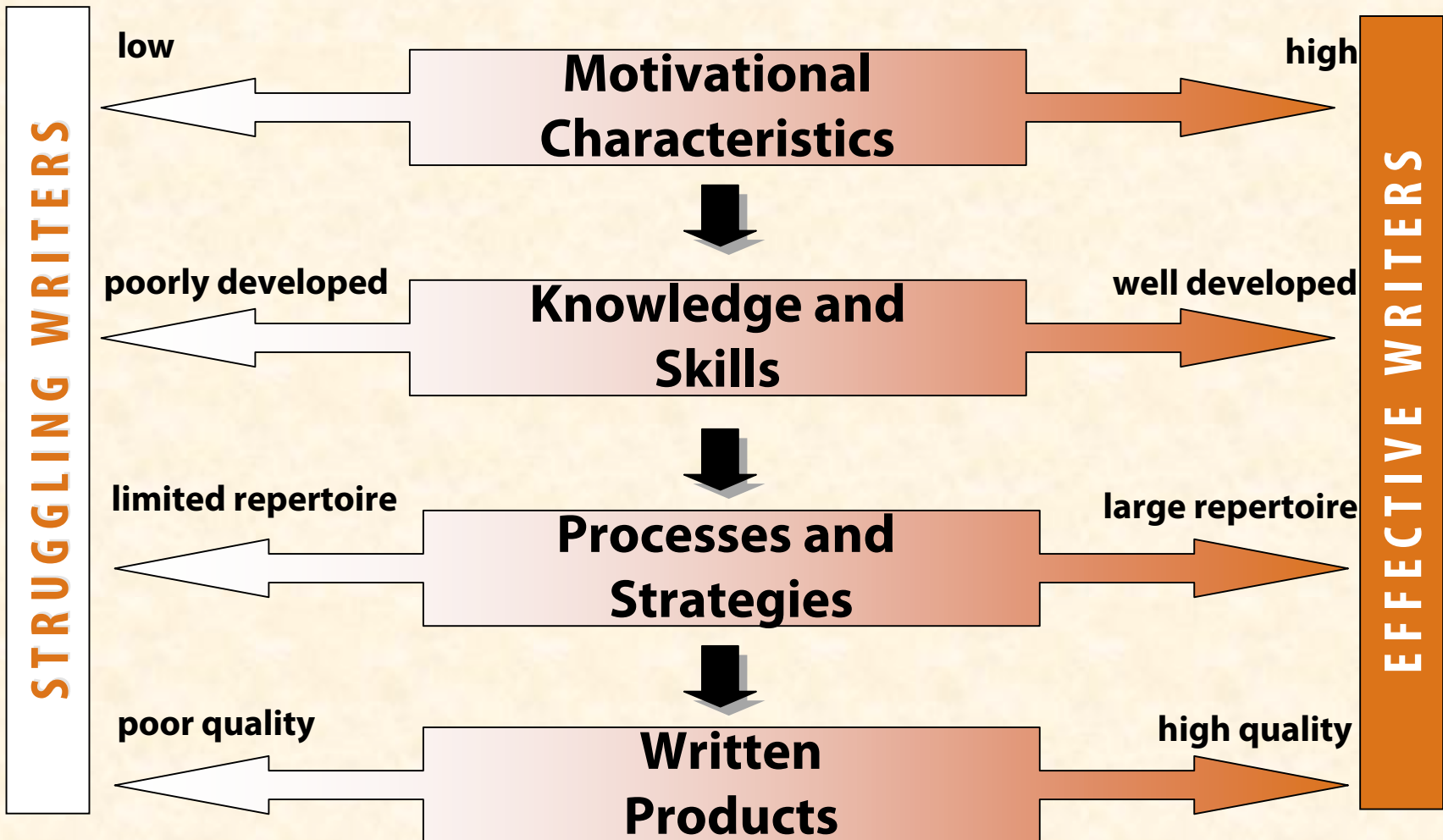
The student is expected to:

- Write in a variety of forms for various audiences and purposes
- Select and use recursive writing processes for self-initiated and assigned writing
- Compose original texts, applying the conventions of written language to communicate clearly
- Apply standard grammar and usage to communicate clearly and effectively in writing
- Use writing as a tool for learning and research
- Evaluate his/her own writing and the writings of others
- Interact with writers inside and outside the classroom in ways that reflect the practical uses of writing

Writing as a Recursive Process . . .



The Continuum of Writers



Characteristics of Effective Writers—Activity



What are the characteristics of an effective writer?

Consider:

- **Motivational Characteristics**
- **Knowledge and Skills**
- **Processes**
- **Written Products**

Helping Struggling Writers: We Can Make a Difference

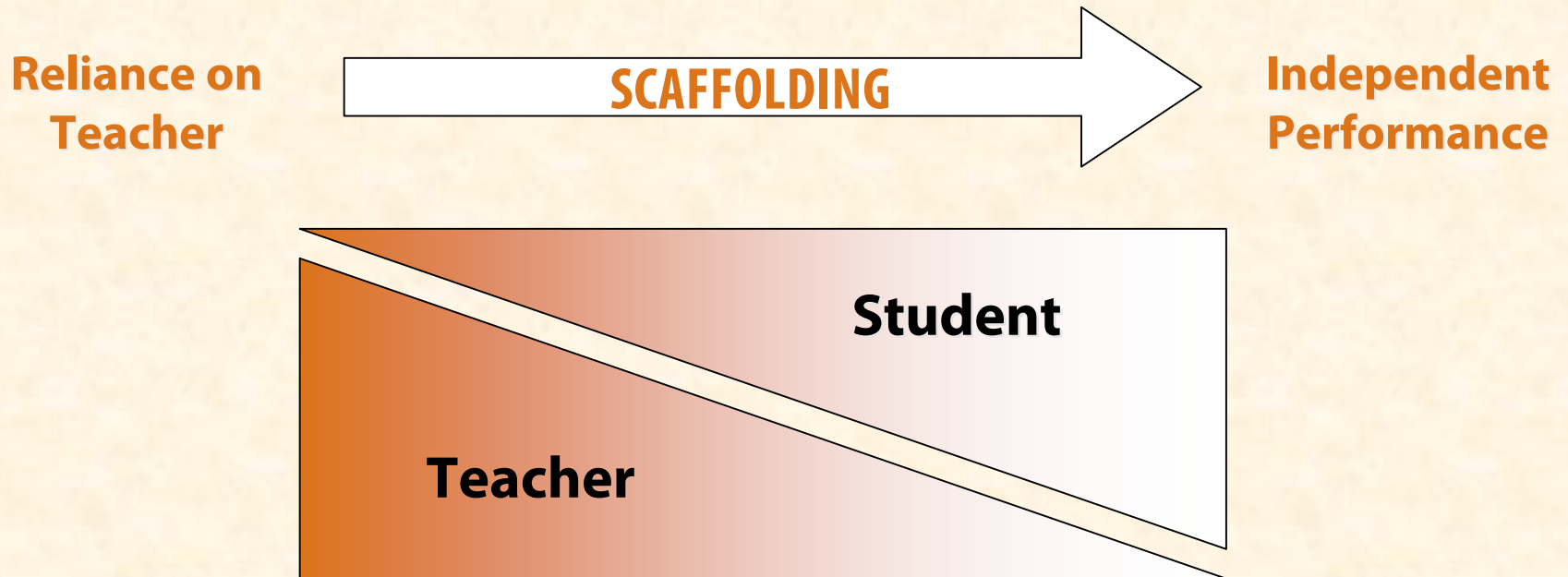
Why do some students struggle with writing?

How can we as teachers make a difference?

- **Provide a motivating environment for writing**
- **Teach knowledge and skills and their application**
- **Model thought processes and strategies
(think-aloud technique)**

Goal of Scaffolding

The goal of scaffolding is to produce independent thinkers, learners, and writers!



Scaffolding

- Establish a motivating environment
- Assess student needs
- Select and explain a strategy
- Build prerequisite knowledge and skills
- Promote student mastery of the strategy
- Model the strategy (e.g., think aloud, etc.)
- Practice collaboratively to promote internalization
- Encourage students to apply the strategy independently
- Assess strategy mastery and usage
- Teach regulation of strategy use

Tips for Getting the Most Out of Your Scaffolding

- **Select wisely and keep it simple.** Choose one or two strategies to teach and provide scaffolding for those strategies
- **Use record-keeping,** such as “status of the class” charts or checklists, to keep track of student progress and needs
- **Break the class into small groups** based upon needs and provide mini-lessons to groups of 4 or 5 students
- **Do not remove the scaffolding too early.** You are teaching for independent mastery and usage

Promoting Success in the General Education Curriculum: Special Education Adaptations

Adaptations

- What are the expectations?
- What are the setting demands?
- What do I know about the student?
- What are my choices for adaptations?

How is it working?

Student Success: Adaptations

Bright Ideas



**Instructional
Design
Adaptations**



**Behavioral
Support
Adaptations**

**Instructional/
Curricular
Adaptations**

**Positive Learning Community
and Access to the General Education Curriculum**

Instructional Design Adaptations: Know Your Students

- **Plan for adaptations**
- **Access resources**
- **Collaborate with the team**
- **Integrate technology**
- **Assess learning**
- **Monitor student progress**

Instructional and Curricular Adaptations

Instructional:

- Consider students' literacy levels and needs
- Activate background knowledge
- Use clear, simple directions
- Provide opportunities to respond
- Adjust pacing and provide feedback

Curricular:

- Make learning visible and explicit
- Highlight key information and concepts
- Break tasks or activities into steps
- Use games to provide practice
- Provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate learning

Instructional and Curricular Adaptations (cont.)

**Make
Learning
Visible and
Explicit**



- Use modeling and think-alouds
- Provide a written list of steps
- Have students self-monitor as they complete each step
- Support auditory information with visual and tactile cues

Instructional and Curricular Adaptations (cont.)

Examples:

- Advertisement
- News release
- Web or map
- Comic strip
- Collage
- Diorama



**Provide
Multiple Ways
for Students to
Demonstrate
Learning**

Behavioral Support Adaptations



Use strategies that increase appropriate student behaviors:

- **Provide structure and be consistent**
- **Use proactive teaching**
- **Teach alternative behaviors**

The Think-Aloud Technique

My First Wheels

My first bike was blue and had a black seat, black tires, and chrome handlebars. It got pretty banged up the first week because I kept crashing and wrecking. My dad told me that was normal, but I wanted it to stay pretty and new-looking.

I kept that bike for years and helped my younger brothers learn to ride on it. Do you remember getting your first wheels? Maybe you call the baby carriage and the tricycle your first wheels, but I don't count those! That new bike could really take me places — fast. And I was the “driver.”

Would this line make more of an impression in another place?

I'm not sure about this start, but I think I'll come back to it later.

Hmm . . . I wonder if my audience has had similar experiences?

Effective Writing

Effective writing requires keeping the purpose, audience, content, and form in mind as the “big picture” develops.

Keep in Mind . . .

- **Planning occurs *after* determining a topic.**
- **Plans are continually revisited and revised throughout the writing process.**
- **Planning includes thinking about purpose, audience, content, and form.**
- **There is no *one* right way to plan.**

When Planning . . .

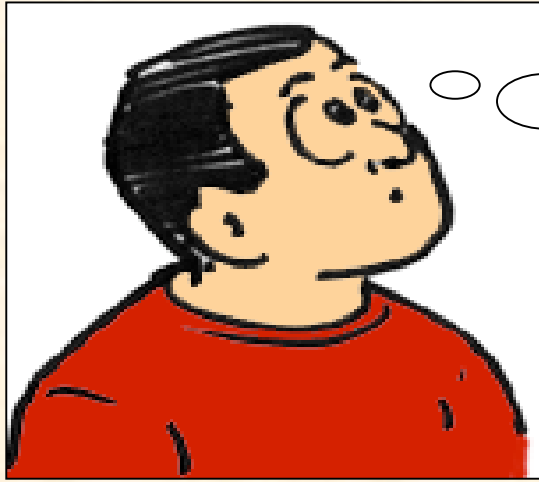
Effective Writers

- Set goals by reflecting upon the purpose, audience, and mode of writing
- Systematically search their memories for related information
- Conduct research to find new information
- Organize the collected information
- Reflect upon topics, ideas, content, and organization

Struggling Writers

- Spend little time planning
- View planning as determining a topic
- Do not have an organizational plan
- Lack effective strategies for generating content
- Fail to research new information
- Lack knowledge of text structure

Planning for Purpose



- **Why am I writing this?**
- **What do I hope to accomplish?**
- **How will I accomplish my purpose?**

Teach Students Related Knowledge and Skills by :

- Showing examples of writing for different purposes and helping students identify each purpose.
- Brainstorming a list of reasons for writing and posting it in the classroom.
- Explaining the relationship between text structure and purpose.
- Having students record their answers to the metacognitive questions listed above.

Planning for Audience



- **For whom am I writing?**
- **What do I know about this audience?**
- **What will my audience need or want to know?**

Teach Students Related Knowledge and Skills by :

- Brainstorming possible audiences and discussing characteristics of each.
- Discussing the effects of audience on what you say (content) and how you say it (style).
- Discussing characteristics of writing that effectively reaches the intended audience and writing that doesn't.
- Having students record their answers to the metacognitive questions listed above.

Planning for Content



- **What do I know about this topic?**
- **What do I need to know about this topic?**
- **How can I learn what I need to know?**

Teach Students Related Knowledge and Skills by:

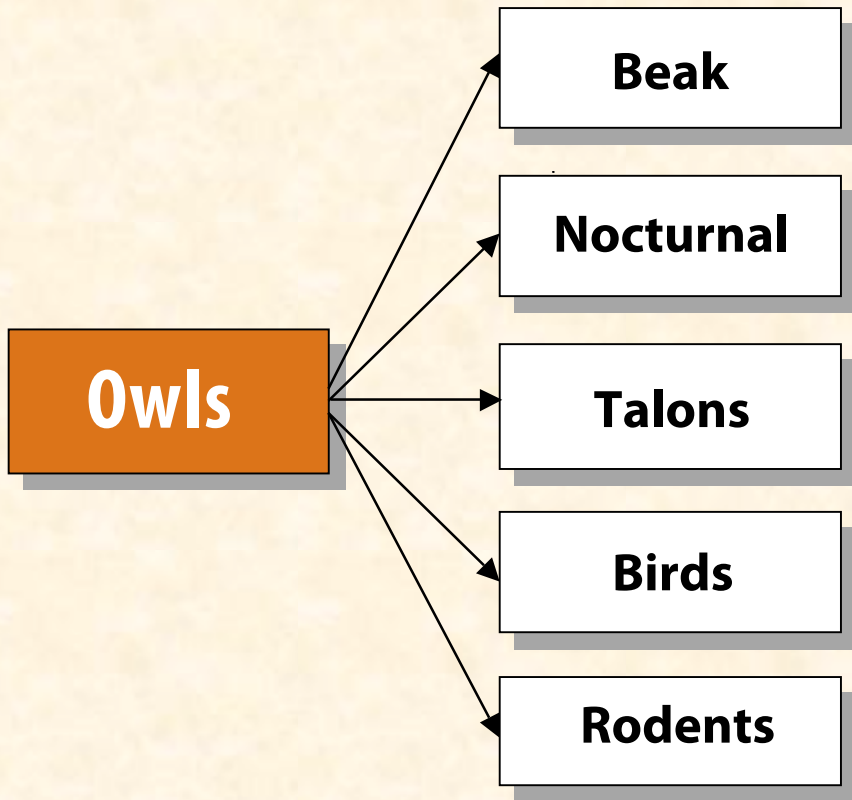
- Demonstrating how different prewriting strategies can be used to generate and organize what a student knows.
- Conducting a mini-lesson on research techniques.
- Having students record their answers to the metacognitive questions listed above.

Planning Content for Struggling Writers

Bright Ideas



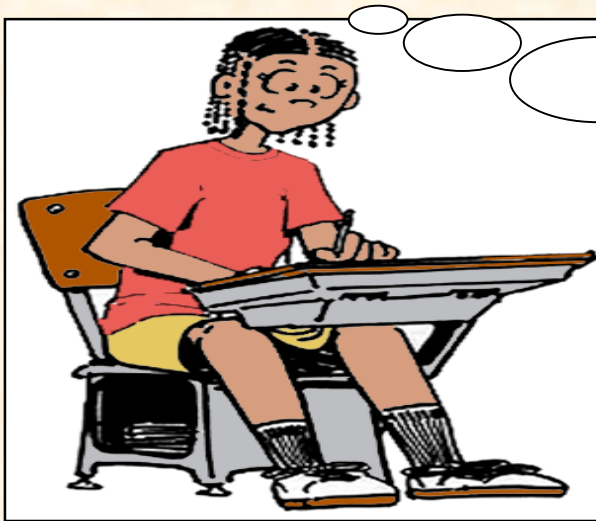
Strategy: Webbing



Possible Adaptations

- Activate prior knowledge through webbing.
- Model webbing with multiple examples.
- Limit the number of web branches.
- Provide a peer scribe.
- Use color-coding to highlight categories.
- Provide graphic organizers (semantic map, Venn diagram) to record ideas.
- Access library materials.
- Use self-sticking notes for arranging and rearranging.
- Allow nonwriters to use illustrations to depict ideas.

Planning for Form



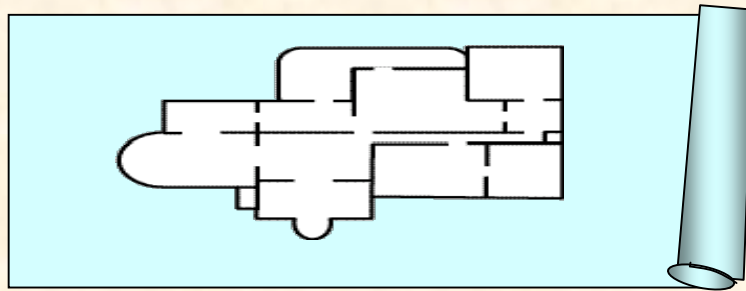
- **How should I arrange my ideas in order to achieve my purpose?**
- **What are the big ideas I want to get across to my audience?**
- **What do I know that supports these big ideas?**

Teach Students Related Knowledge and Skills by :

- Showing examples of different text structures, and examining the arrangement of ideas within them.
- Having students record their answers to the metacognitive questions listed above.

Generating a Writing Plan

“A writing plan is an artist's sketch, a carpenter's plan scratched on a board, a cook's recipe that will be changed during the cooking. A writing plan is not an order or a binding contract. It is an educated guess”



(Murray, 1996, p. 82)

Before students begin drafting, they need to have a plan. This plan can take many forms, such as:

- **formal and informal outlines;**
- **graphic representations; or**
- **any other technique for arranging and sequencing ideas.**

The Planning Conference

Focus of Conference:

Purpose

Content

Audience

Form

The Writer

Explains

Answers

Records



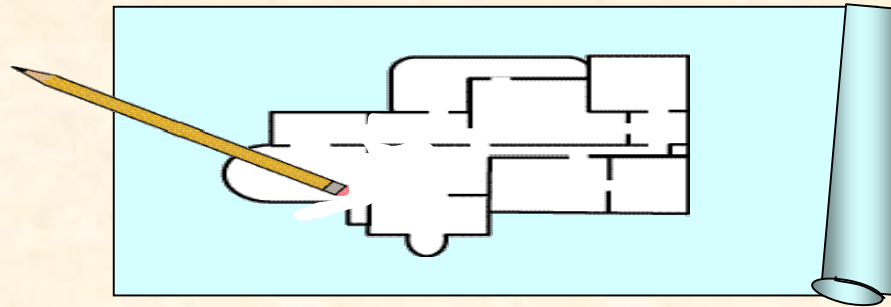
The Partner

Listens

Evaluates

Suggests

Revising the Plan

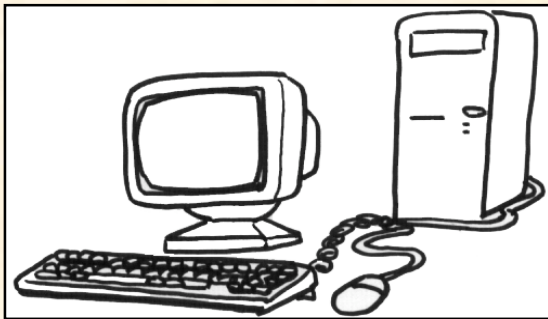


“Plan is revision at its purest The revised plan allows you to avoid a finished draft that does not meet the teacher or employer’s assignment.”

(Murray, 1996, p. 110)

Using Computers for Planning

Word processing programs help students:



- **Easily organize and reorganize their written thoughts during the planning stage.**
- **Develop outlines using the conventional form or a software organizational tool.**
- **Easily make changes to their outlines.**

Drafting: Making a Preliminary Sketch

How Effective Writers Draft

- Keep the plan in mind while drafting
- Monitor whether the draft fulfills the plan
- Monitor whether the draft and/or the plan is effective
- Anticipate and answer reader's questions
- Rely on a variety of drafting strategies

How Struggling Writers Draft

- Write whatever comes to mind with little thought for purpose, audience, or form
- Focus rigidly on mechanics, rules, and formulas rather than meaning
- Lack knowledge of text structure
- Take few, if any, risks

Drafting

Introduction

Audience:

What type of introduction would best capture my reader's attention?

Purpose:

What do I want to accomplish in my introduction? What will help accomplish my purpose and give direction to the rest of the paper?



Content:

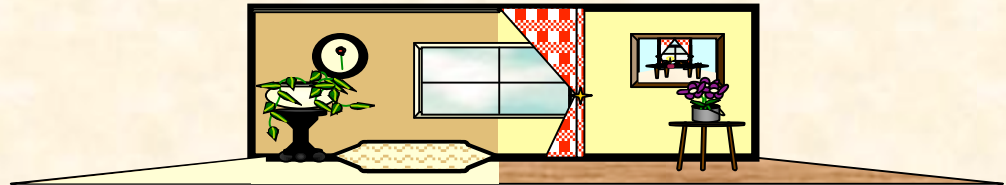
What ideas do I need to introduce or explain? How can I introduce my ideas?

Form:

How should I organize my introduction material? What first? Next?

Drafting (cont.)

Body Paragraphs



Audience: What level of formality do I want to use for this audience?
What transition words will help my reader know that this idea relates to the other ideas?

Purpose: Where can I use elaboration to help fulfill my purpose?
Does this sentence state my idea clearly?

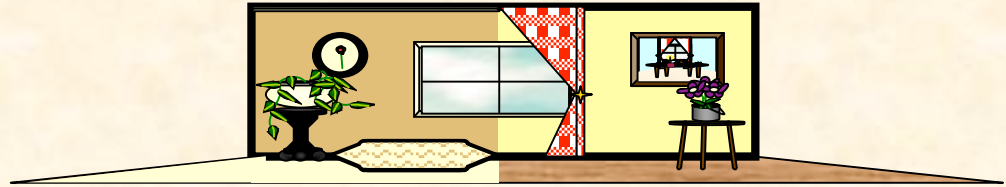
Content: What else do I know about this idea? How can I explain this idea?

Form: How am I sticking to my plan?

Struggling writers benefit from reviewing their answers to these questions with you.

Drafting (cont.)

Body Paragraphs



Teach students related knowledge and skills by:

- Discussing paragraph structure, stressing its flexible nature
- Teaching students to develop topic sentences, detailed supporting sentences, and concluding sentences
- Drawing from a repertoire of elaboration techniques, giving examples for and modeling each type
- Providing a sentence-generating strategy
- Modeling elaboration at the sentence level

Drafting (cont.)

Conclusion

Audience: How can I avoid leaving my reader feeling confused? How can I make an impression on my audience?

Purpose: How can I reiterate my purpose?

Content: How can I summarize my main points?

Form: How should I order my conclusion?

Drafting (cont.)

Conclusion

Teach students related knowledge and skills:

- Use examples of successful and unsuccessful conclusions to emphasize that effective conclusions summarize content and appeal to the reader
- Model think-aloud techniques that effective writers use to conclude a text
- Guide students to ask questions about purpose, audience, content, and form when choosing their writing techniques

Drafting for Struggling Writers

Strategy: Timed Free Writing

- Activate prior knowledge
- Suspend normal writing conventions temporarily
- Allow students to write sentences, phrases, or word lists
- Encourage students to write continuously for the specified time

The Drafting Conference

The Writer

- Explains purpose, audience, content, and form to conference partner
- Reads aloud the draft or a selection from the draft
- Asks partner questions to clarify and improve the draft
- Records any ideas or changes

The Partner

- Listens and notes writer's intended purpose, audience, content, and form
- Listens to draft
- Answers writer's questions
- Asks questions regarding the draft
- Rereads draft if necessary
- Suggests improvements

Revising

“Tell any group of teachers in a workshop that revision is the key to good writing and you’ll generally see hearty nods of agreement. The trouble is, so much energy has been spent on pre-writing and drafting before we ever get there. Revision is like the last stop on a long, long vacation. Everybody is tired and really wants to get on home, even if it means missing a few things.”

(Spandel & Stiggins, 1990, p. 106)

When Revising . . .

Effective Writers

- Focus on organization of text as a whole
- Evaluate text in terms of writing goals
- Undertake substantial revision to improve the text
- Check grammar, syntax, spelling, and word choice

Struggling Writers

- Cannot identify what would improve their writing
- Often fail to recognize errors and lapses in meaning
- Lack strategies and skills for solving the problems they can identify
- Make revisions that do not improve quality of text

Guidelines for Revision

Writers can:

- Locate problems by considering text section by section, and then sentence by sentence
- Add, delete, substitute, and rearrange material as needed
- Revise for purpose, audience, content, and form

Teaching Revising

Scaffolding should be used when teaching revising.

- **Introduce revision steps gradually**
- **With success, teach more steps in the process**

Revision for Struggling Writers

Strategy: Color Coding for Expansion

First Draft

I saved my money to buy a car. I saved for a long time and really wanted it. I thought about it a lot. When I was sixteen, I got the money from the bank and I bought it.

Working Draft

For the last three years, I saved every penny I could so that I could buy a car. I saved for a long time and really wanted it. I thought about it a lot. Then my sixteenth birthday arrived. I was thrilled to go to the bank, withdraw all my savings, and go to the dealership with my father to make my down payment on this incredible purchase.

Revision for Struggling Writers (cont.)

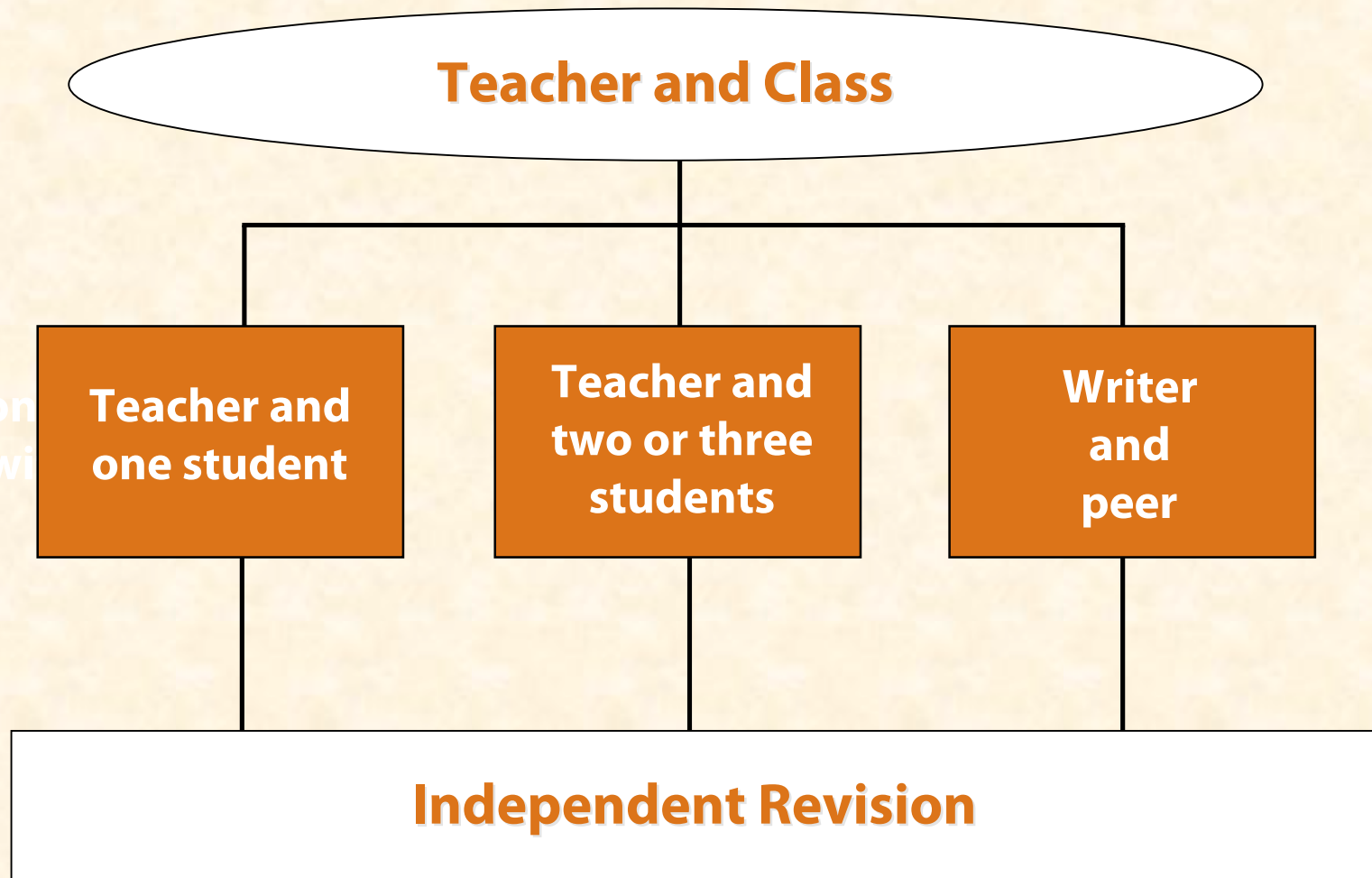
Additional ideas for revision:

- Use teacher conferencing
- Highlight sparingly
- Choose specific colors for coding
- Teach one revision type at a time
- Encourage peer questioning
- Use a graphic organizer
- Provide access to the computer

Revising Tips

- **Empower students and improve their motivation.**
- **Encourage additions. Most student writing is underdeveloped.**
- **Facilitate peer conferencing and consultation.**
- **Pose questions related to purpose, audience, content, and form.**

Revision Conferences



The Revision Conference

Steps:

1. The partner listens and praises.
2. The writer and partner reread and evaluate.
3. The writer records questions, comments, and suggestions.
4. The writer asks the partner questions about step 3.
5. The partner discusses questions, comments, and suggestions with the writer.
6. The writer revises.

Revision Conferences: Classroom Tips

Students need to be taught to conference effectively.

Modeling is extremely important in teaching conferencing.

While you are conferencing with a student, other students can be engaged in reading, writing, or peer conferencing.

Editing: Cleaning Up



What is editing?

When should writers edit?

Why teach editing skills?

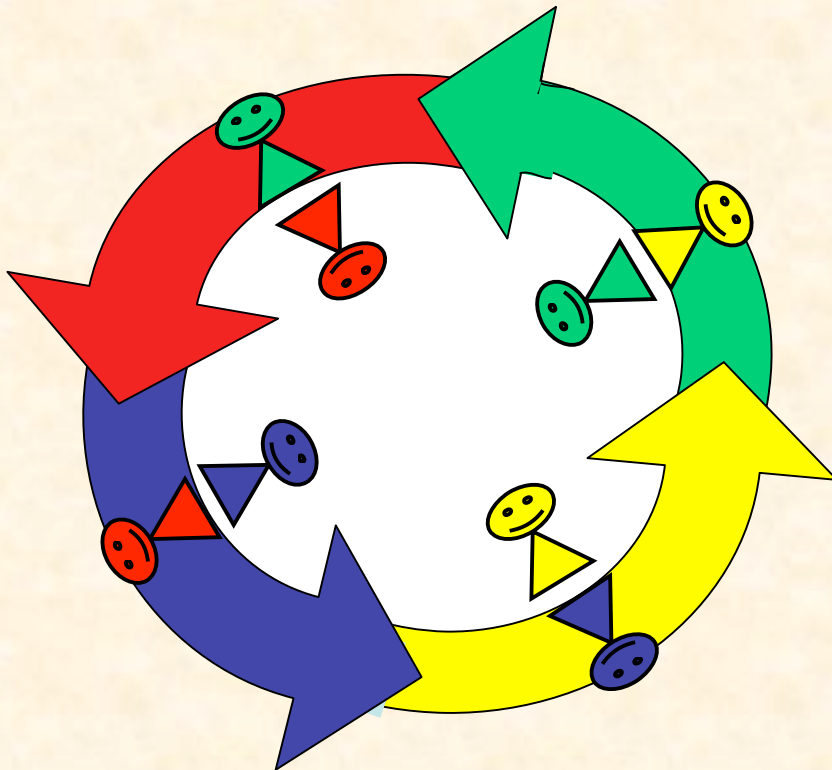
Who is responsible for editing?

Editing for Struggling Writers

Bright Ideas



Strategy: Clocking



Possible Adaptations

- Model the editing process using think-alouds and demonstrations
- Allow more time for editing
- Provide mini-lessons on the editing skills required
- Begin by editing only one area at a time
- Pair a struggling student with a successful student
- Teach collaborative skills to facilitate interaction among students

Cleaning Up After Editing: Classroom Tips

- The student first uses checklists and other strategies to edit the work
- Peers edit the work after the teacher has modeled editing strategies
- Students place a well-edited piece (edited by both self and peer) in an editing basket for a final editing conference with the teacher
- Use mini-lessons to build knowledge and skills
- Teach one strategy at a time
- Students should proofread for conventions that have been taught
- Use selective marking to focus on specific errors that the teacher has tried to help the student eliminate
- Don't just assign editing—teach the necessary skills, strategies, and symbols

The Finished Product

