“Liven Up Students Writing!: Strategies for Supporting Narrative and Expository Expression”

22nd Annual DuBard Dyslexia and Related Disorders Conference
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Warm greetings from Boston!
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- Unitary curriculum emphasizing spoken and written language relationships.
- Offering dual teacher certification in both Speech-Language Pathology and in Reading.

Special “Thanks!”

Dianne King, Alison Webster, and Missy Schraeder
Dubard School of Language Disorders
Gulf Coast Education Initiative Consortium

Disclosure: I am an author of “From Talking to Writing” (Jennings & Haynes, 2018). I receive royalties and am paid to speak and consult on topics I will present on today.

- Semantic feature analysis
- Sentence expansion strategies
- Personal sequence narratives
- Micro-discourse text elaboration
- Application to expository text

www.LandmarkOutreach.org/publications

Common Approaches To Teaching Writing:
(1) Activation of prior knowledge through discussion before writing

(2) Use of Graphic Organizers
G.O.’s are visual depictions of strategies that guide students’ writing of text.
Graphic Organizers:

**Pro’s**
+ Support executive functioning
+ Complement self-regulation strategies
  (SRSD, Graham et al, 2016)

However....

...general discussion, coupled with use of graphic organizers, is insufficient to meet the writing needs of children with language-based learning difficulties (LLD).

Let’s experience some of what our LLD students struggle with...

Components of Reading/Writing: “The Chart”  (Hook & Haynes, 2015)

Extrinsic Factors: Culture, Home & Teaching Environments

Some components of underlying language have greater impact than others!

Vocabulary + Sentence = Listening Comprehension/Expression

Methods for Developing Underlying Vocabulary and Sentence Skills

Use strategy instruction to support attention, working memory, and executive functioning (self-regulation).
Employ multi-modal practice to aid learning and consolidation of language skills.

**Listening**  
**Speaking**  
**Reading**  
**Writing**

Use theme-centered (topic area) vocabulary and concepts to teach language skills -- but why?

(strategy) Use multi-modal practice to aid learning and consolidation of language skills.

Use theme-centered (topic area) vocabulary and concepts to teach language skills -- but why?

Use theme-centered vocabulary and concepts usually aid recall and reduce the load on students’ memory (e.g., Poirier & Saint-Aubin, 1995).

Strategy for introducing vocabulary: Activate and build on students’ prior knowledge related to the theme/topic of interest.

Use Multi-Modal Sources for Thematic Vocabulary

- **Reading/listening materials**
- **videos**
- **manipulatives**
- **pictures**
Use visuals to activate topical vocabulary knowledge (Sample Theme = 19th C. New England Recreation -- for this audience!)

Guide students’ visual analysis of complex pictures or objects.

Orally brainstorm and map new vocabulary to existing words

Create word boxes with brainstormed nouns and verbs – these provide core vocabulary for word, sentence and discourse activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>captain</td>
<td>navigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mast</td>
<td>stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rudder</td>
<td>steer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sail</td>
<td>fill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waves</td>
<td>splash</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Classroom phonological strategy: Help students to say hard-to-pronounce key words via choral chaining...

Forward Chaining:
- “O-”
- “Ocean-”
- “Oceanog-”
- “Oceanograph-”

(Backward Chaining simply starts w/last syllable...)

Strategy: Link Chaining with Spelling

Target word: nautical
Child’s cryptic spelling: nacl

(Child’s phonetic spelling):

\[ \text{nul} \rightarrow \text{nautical} \] (teacher’s correction)

Vocabulary Strategy: Foster and exploit **semantic feature** knowledge to aid vocabulary learning of key thematic nouns (and/or verbs).
**Semantic features** are specific, component meanings associated with words:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VOCABULARY</th>
<th>WORDS</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;rudder&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>oak</td>
<td>part of boat</td>
<td>in the stern</td>
<td>steers boat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Build learners' semantic feature knowledge with structured semantic mapping.

**Strategy for aiding descriptive vocabulary:** introduce adjective features by difficulty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Easier</th>
<th>More Difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Easy Four&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;The Senses&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Size</td>
<td>3. Taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Number</td>
<td>5. &quot;Sounds like&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Inner Feelings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- "rudder" steers the boat
- Oak with brass hinges
- Captain

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**Strategies for color features**

- Gemstone names
  - "The woodsman's colored shirt."
- Vegetable names
  - "The turkey's red wattle."
- Ice cream/ candy names
  - "The bird's brown tail feathers."

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**Strategy for size feature**

"the ___ turkey chased the frightened lad."

**Student:** "small" + "big"

**Teacher:** Where would "massive" go?
- "Puny"? "Average"? "Miniscule"? "Large"?

Later, focus on height, width, length, depth, weight (depends on object).
Design feature strategy

1. Understand and memorize highest frequency designs
2. Apply in phrase, sentence and discourse contexts

“lad’s ___ jacket”
“woodman’s ___ shirt”
“___ wingfeathers”

Take a Stretch Break!

Teach using a sentence hierarchy!

- Jennings & Haynes, 2002

Compound/complex sentence sequence

- Jennings & Haynes, 2002

Microsoft Word - 10.0
Semantic feature knowledge aids sentence development.

Sentence Skill Teaching Using a **Listening or Reading** (Recognition) Modality

Teacher writes target sentence pattern on board with correct versus incorrect sentence structures.

(Article) + Adj + N + V + where + when

1. Three gulls screeched at dusk.
2. The blue waves washed over the stern at dusk
3. Barnacles attached themselves to the bottom of the boat throughout the summer.

Task: Students identify sentences as correct versus incorrect and if incorrect, identify the missing part.

see Haynes & Jennings, 1992

Sentence Skill Teaching Using a **Speaking or Writing** (Production) Modality

Teacher displays target sentence pattern on board with theme-based nouns.

(Article) + Adj + N + V + where + when

gulls
waves
barnacles

Task: Students take turns producing the target sentence pattern using the theme-based nouns

Example:

Joanne: “Sharp barnacles sliced through the rope during the storm.”

Sentences Combining: A Germinal Summary Strategy

1. Inserting adjectives, adverbs
   - The sailors drank lemonade. The sailors were thirsty. → The thirsty sailors drank lemonade.
   - The seagull ate the cookies. The seagull ate hungrily. → The seagull ate the cookies hungrily
2. Producing compound subjects and objects.
3. Producing compound sentences (and, but)
4. Producing sentences with adverbial clauses (because, after, when, until)
5. Producing sentences with relative clauses.

Examples from Denver, Colorado and Weymouth, MA

Leslie Laud and colleagues’ application of sentence strategies with ELL and monolingual struggling learners in public school classrooms
Sentence Teaching Sequence in Colorado

- Lesson 1: Introduce Concept of Sentence Parts, within Themes
- Lesson 2: Strengthen Sense of Sentences (Who/What & Did What)
- Lesson 3: Begin Writing Simple Sentences, with Scaffolds
- Lesson 4: Continue Scaffolded Sentence Writing
- Lessons 5-15: Continue Sentence Practice and Decrease Scaffolds

Prepositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who (or what?)</th>
<th>Did what?</th>
<th>Where?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiders</td>
<td>weave webs</td>
<td>in woods</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiders</td>
<td>weave webs</td>
<td>in woods</td>
<td>in fall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conjunctions

- Spiders weave webs.
- Spiders weave webs because they want food.
- Spiders weave webs if they catch food.
- Spiders lay clear eggs.
- Spiders lay clear eggs because they want food.
- Spiders lay clear eggs if enemies can not see them.
- Spiders lay clear eggs because enemies want to eat them.

Theme-based Sentence Expansion

- Spiders lay clear eggs. Enemies can not see them.
- Spiders lay clear eggs. Enemies want to eat them.
- Spiders eat insects.
- Spiders eat insects because ____________

Sentence Combining

Take a Stretch Break!
A "Personal Sequence Narrative" (PSN) is a logically sequenced story retell based on the individual’s experience.

**Basic PSN’s Elements:**

**Introductory Sentence:** ("I" or "we" voice) + (specific event) + (where) + (when)

**Body:** Chronologically ordered sequences driven by transitional words: *First, -- Then, -- Next, -- After that, -- Finally, --*

**Conclusion (optional):** Remark that captures the overall feeling (In conclusion,)

The PSN is a springboard that provides:

- Familiar beginning discourse structure for successful retrieval of salient details.
- Environment for practice varying sentence patterns.
- Preparation for elaborating expository texts.

**Example of Early Three-Part PSN**

**Background:**

- Preliterate second grader, age 7.
- Family history of dyslexia.
- Recount of daily routine.

Accompanying Teacher-Mediated Dialogue

**Student:** First, I get cookies.

**Teacher:** Where do you get the cookies?

**Student:** In the cafeteria.

**Teacher:** Now say the whole sentence to me.

**Student:** First, I get cookies in the cafeteria.

Jennings & Harris, 2018
Student: Then, I meet my friends.
Teacher: Where do you meet your friends?
Student: In the lobby.
Teacher: Say the whole sentence.
Student: Then, I meet my friends in the lobby.

Student: Last, I wait for the class bell to ring.
Teacher: Where do you wait?
Student: At the foot of the stairs.
Teacher: Say the whole sentence:
Student: I wait for the class bell to ring at the foot of the stairs.

Every morning we gather in the Meeting Room for the morning meeting.
First, we find a place to sit on the floor.
Then, Mr. Swanson reads some announcements.
Next, Mr. Kahn tells us which teachers are absent.
After that, we are reminded not to throw snowballs.
Finally, the bell rings and we go to class.

All in all, we enjoy our early morning meeting.

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Strategies for Teaching Text Chunks – “Micro-Discourse” Strategies

1. Build semantic cohesion: (core vocabulary, synonyms, pronouns)
2. Teach “Detail Circle”; Embed details in:
   i) Single sentences
   ii) Small “text units”
   iii) Personal sequence narrative

What is a word-level problem in this student’s writing?

Many bears live inside Yellowstone Park. There are large bears found there. Tourists at Yellowstone should stay at least 100 yards from bears. Every year, bears cause serious injuries to visitors.
Strategy Needed: Develop Synonym Knowledge to Support Semantic Cohesion

“bears”

bruins they
grizzly bears dangerous animals
land mammals creatures
omnivores these mammals

Mnemonic Strategy: Cohesion Circle

Semantic Cohesion

Students need to recognize and employ variety and balance in their nouns, synonyms, and pronouns.

See if you can identify the semantic cohesive ties to the proposition “grizzlies” in this short passage…

Many grizzlies live inside Yellowstone Park. They are the largest of all the bears found there. A tourist visiting Yellowstone is advised to stay at least 100 yards from these dangerous creatures at all times. Every year, they cause serious injuries to visitors.

Another common “micro-discourse” problem for most struggling writers:

Lack of strategies for adding a variety of salient details

Solution: Combine semantic feature analysis with “Detail Circle” strategy (next slide)

Adding Relevant Facts

Teacher Statement: The children raked the leaves in the yard.

Relevant Fact: The kids raked them into a large heap.

Relevant Fact: The pile of leaves started to blow all over the yard.
Adding Adjective Detail

Teacher Statement: The children raked the leaves in the yard.

Relevant Fact: The kids raked them into a large heap.

Adjective Sentence: The leaves were red, yellow and pumpkin orange.

Adding Why-/How-Detail

Teacher Statement: The children raked the leaves in the yard.

Self-prompt: Why did the children rake the leaves in the yard?

Why-detail: The children raked the leaves in the yard because their father was going to pay them.

Adding a Quotation

Teacher Statement: The children raked the leaves in the yard.

Fact: The kids raked the leaves into a large heap.

Quotation: One of them asked, “How much longer do we have to do this?”

Adding a Simile

Teacher/Student Statement: The colorful leaves had been floating down into the yard for days.

Simile: The red, orange and yellow colors looked like a beautiful carpet.

Adding a For Instance-Sentence

Teacher/Student Statement: The family had many fall chores to finish to prepare for winter.

For instance, there were leaves to rake, storm windows to put up, and cord wood to split.
Adding an Inference Sentence with If/Then-Detail

Teacher Statement: The children raked the leaves in the yard.
Self-prompt: How did it make a difference if the children raked the leaves in the yard?
If/Then-Detail: If the children raked the leaves in the yard, then they could go to the movies later.

Adding Humor

Teacher/Student Statement: The kids had raked all the leaves in the yard into a huge pile.

Humor: It was funny when their golden retriever leaped into the gigantic pile and sank out of sight!

Fact: They all laughed as the dog tried to swim out of the leaves.

In order to become a useful strategy for struggling writers, the Detail Circle needs to be memorized and the applied.

Recap: Application of Detail Strategies to Elaborating a Personal Sequenced Narrative (PSN)

- PSN is planned with close teacher monitoring and guidance
- Written independently on self-outlined template (in class and later for homework)
- Students have internalized the transitional words, can recite the PSN outline, and can draw the Detail Circle in the margin as a visual scaffold if necessary
- Detail elaboration skills can then be applied in more complex, less predictable textual environments.
Tracking a Variety of Details

After that, we tried to get the wrist bands so we could go on the rides for twenty dollars. I walked up to the booth and asked for one wrist band, please.

The evil, older woman just looked at me like I was crazy. She said, "We don't sell those anymore." I was so mad. Now I had to buy twenty tickets which only got me on four rides. I thought that was a rip-off. I asked her, "Why don't you have them anymore?" She just said, "Next!" That made me really mad. She gave me twenty tickets and I left the booth.
Basic Process Paragraph  
Theme: Mountain Climbing

There were many steps for climbing the mountain. 
**First**, the mountain climbers packed their bags. 
**Then**, they began the long trek into base camp. 
**Next**, …  
**After that**, …  
**Finally**, …

Concluding sentence frame: Performing/Making/Doing [activity] is a complex process that results in (a) [positive adjective(s)] + [product(s)].

Expansion of Process Paragraph Using Detail Strategies

There were many steps for climbing the mountain. 
**First**, the mountain climbers packed their bags.  
*Why/How?*: They needed to carry light nutritious foods that would give them energy. 

**Then**, they began the long trek into base camp.  
*Why/How?*: The trek into base camp improved their physical conditioning and prepared them for higher altitudes. 

Next … (et cetera)

17 yr-old H.S. student’s process paragraph:  
“Steps for Applying to College”

Persuasive Paragraph  
(Theme: Sailing Safety)

Intro: There are several reasons why young teenagers should not sail out to sea without an experienced sailor on board.

First of all, green sailors lack awareness of weather conditions. 
Secondly, they may not know how to navigate well. 
Thirdly, they may panic if the boat goes out of control. 
In conclusion, it is important that sailors are well-prepared before they head into the open waters.


Multi-Paragraph Level Strategies

- Self-check first:  
  - Do my students know the vocabulary and concepts?  
  - Have they mastered the relevant sentence patterns?  
  - Do they have know their strategies for building different paragraph types?  
- Build multi-paragraph pieces from combinations of paragraph types.  
- Build essays as elaborations of paragraph level concepts.  
- Employ oral discussion prior to writing.  
- Provide models

For example: Paragraph-level structures can be transformed into multi-paragraph texts by using detail strategies …
Intro Para: There are several reasons why young teenagers should not sail away from the coast without an experienced sailor on board. These include: __A__, __B__, __C__.

First of all, [expand A into sentence] [How/Why? Impact?]

Secondly, [expand B into sentence] [How/Why? Impact?]

Thirdly, [expand C into sentence] [How/Why? Impact?]

In conclusion, the reasons above provide strong support for the view that __________________________ [phrase re: beneficial impact on society & implications for future.]

- Jennings & Haynes, 2006/2011, 2018

Selected References


- Framing Your Thoughts. Project Read, www.projectread.com