

Writing

The only way to help students improve their writing is to read what they write and talk to them about their writing.

—Juli Kendall, author and middle school ESL teacher

KEY TERMS

- invented spelling
- modeled writing
- shared writing
- guided writing
- interactive writing
- independent writing
- journals
- process writing
- Writer's Workshop
- word wall
- thematic word chart
- personal word book
- holistic scoring
- analytic scoring
- primary trait scoring
- multi-trait scoring

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What does the research tell us about effective writing instruction for ELLs?
2. What does a theory of second language writing include?
3. How is writing related to oral language and reading?
4. How can an understanding of ELLs' writing strengths and needs inform a teacher's choice of instructional approaches, methods, and strategies?

Writing is one of the most important skills students learn in school, and like reading, it is crucial to ELL students' academic success because it is one of the principal means by which they display their knowledge and competence in academic subjects. It also encourages self-reflection, allowing students to chronicle their personal reactions and journey (Hadaway, Vardell, & Young, 2002).

Although all students face the challenge of developing their writing to grade-level expectations, ELLs face the additional challenge of learning to write before they are proficient speakers of English. An additional challenge, particularly for newcomers, is that they are learning to adjust socially and culturally to a new country and a new school. Dana R. Ferris and John Hedgcock (2004) point out that ELL students learning to write may need more of everything in terms of procedures, heuristics, content, practice, and feedback than native English-speaking students. They note that, unlike native English speakers, ELL writers

- begin with an intact L1 and a *developing* knowledge of spoken and written English as a second language; are simultaneously acquiring *language* and *composing* skills;
- may or may not be familiar with the Roman alphabet and may thus still be learning English orthographic conventions;
- may produce sentence level errors influenced by their primary language(s);
- may not have the same topic/schematic knowledge as native English speaking writers due to home country educational experience;
- may have little or no experience with peer response; and

■ may have difficulty with quoting

These issues are known from curriculum and instruction, then consider their English writing

What We Know on Writing

The following table summarizes research on writing instruction from earlier chapters (Hadaway et al., 2002).

The writing development of English speakers

Both ELLs and native speakers learn proper syntax and grammar. Learning specific genres and using writing to learn are also important.

ELL students' writing development

The NLP and the oral production of students' oral production of English. This research shows that oral language is learned to write in many countries, most orally, and the initial writing may be oral, but eventually, however, that the students who speak English focus on topic and language development.

Students with limited English writing skills

Both the NLP and the oral production of students' writing skills in English. This relationship between native language and writing skills in English. For example, already known sentences, and paragraphs may also be familiar, simply need to be

- may have little or no experience using outside sources, paraphrasing, and quoting. (p. 15)

These issues and others are addressed in this chapter. We first review what we know from current research on writing instruction for ELLs. Next we discuss writing instruction through the framework of writing to, with, and by ELLs students. We then consider additional supports teachers can provide as ELL students develop their English writing skills. Finally, we describe ways to assess students' writing.

What We Know from Research on Writing Instruction for ELLs

The following findings are from the NLP report and the CREDE report discussed in earlier chapters, and the work of other experts on second language writing (Hada-way et al., 2002; Hudelson, 1989; Peregoy & Boyle, 2008; Samway, 2006).

The writing development process for ELL students is similar to the process for native English speakers.

Both ELLs and native English speakers must learn the (English) alphabet, spelling, proper syntax for forming sentences and paragraphs, and the conventions for writing specific genres. Both engage in literacy tasks in a variety of social contexts, and use writing to interact and develop interpersonal relationships.

ELL students' ability to express themselves in written English is highly dependent on their level of oral English proficiency.

The NLP and the CREDE report both found a close relationship between ELL students' oral proficiency in English and their ability to express themselves in written English. This relationship is consistent with research findings on the importance of oral language. With the exception, for example, of older immigrant students who learned to write English in English-as-a-foreign-language classes in their home countries, most ELL students are unlikely to use words in writing they do not know orally, and the language forms they use in writing will typically be limited, at least initially, to the forms they are able to use in conversation. Simply put, ELL students' writing may be only as good as their English speaking ability. This does not mean, however, that teachers should delay writing instruction until students are able to speak English well. Beginning-level ELLs benefit from writing instruction that focuses on topics they can talk about. Such instruction supports their English language development.

Students with literacy skills in their native language can transfer many of these skills to English writing.

Both the NLP and the CREDE report also found a strong relationship between students' writing ability in their native language and their writing ability in English. This relationship is similar to the one found between reading ability in the native language and reading ability in English. As with reading, students' native writing skills are a major asset because much of their knowledge will transfer to English. For example, a 4th grade student who attended grades K-3 in Mexico will already know how to hold a pencil, how to form letters, how to write words, sentences, and paragraphs, and how writing is used for communication. This student may also be familiar with the conventions of different genres of writing and will simply need to develop enough proficiency in English to use these skills in his

new language, while learning the conventions, styles, and other features specific to English writing.

This transfer of skills is one of the primary reasons bilingual education programs place emphasis on helping ELLs first develop literacy skills in their native language. Furthermore, as Sarah Hudelson (1989) observes in her classic book *Write on: Children Writing in ESL*, “native language writing allows second language learners to demonstrate some of what they know in a language they control. Second language learners are thus able to show their competence rather than their incompetence and to grow in their confidence in themselves as learners. This, in turn, may have positive effects on learners’ willingness to risk writing in a new language” (p. 46).

Research suggests that letter formation and spelling skills may most easily transfer for those literate L1 students whose native language, such as Spanish, French, German, or Tagalog, uses the same alphabet as English. But even if a student has literacy skills in a language with a different alphabetic script, such as Russian, Khmer, Hindi, or Arabic, or a nonalphabetic language, such as Chinese, many other writing skills will still easily transfer to English.

Not all transfer from the first language, however, is positive transfer. The CREDE report found instances of negative cross-language influences that might show up, for example, when a Spanish-speaking ELL student erroneously applies Spanish phonological and orthographic rules to English spelling. Consider the following sentence a Spanish-speaking ELL student wrote in her journal, describing what she did over the weekend:

Dend ay it a sanwich end hotchetoots.
[Then I eat a sandwich and Hot Cheetos.]

This student is using her knowledge of Spanish phonics to write words in English, thus *ay* for *I*, *it* for *eat*, and *end* for *and*. Because the /th/ sound does not exist in Spanish, the student approximates the spelling for *then* by applying Spanish phonics to how she hears and pronounces it, *dend*. The CREDE report is quick to point out, however, that this “negative” transfer is actually a good sign because it shows that the student is using an effective strategy, applying her Spanish writing skills to writing in English. Most students quickly figure out what does and what does not transfer. Also, teachers can plan instruction to help students recognize instances of negative transfer to avoid.

English oral language skills have little impact on English word-level writing skills.

Word-level skills such as spelling are not strongly related to oral language skills in English. Thus, ELL students can memorize the spelling of words without knowing their meaning or how to use them in a sentence.

English oral language skills have a strong impact on English text-level writing skills.

English oral language skills have a strong impact on writing when large chunks of text are involved, such as sentences, paragraphs, and complete narratives. Students with well-developed oral language skills in English therefore tend to have better writing skills in English. The oral language skills of listening comprehension and vocabulary knowledge were found to be specifically related to better writing.

As evidence of this finding, consider the responses to the prompt, “What did you do this weekend?” written by two Spanish-speaking students with different levels of oral English proficiency that appear in Figure 8.1. Note that both students are still relying on their knowledge of Spanish writing and so we see examples of negative transfer in both responses. Student B, however, clearly has better oral English skills. The length and variety of her sentence structures reveal that she has a larger vocabulary and greater knowledge of English syntax to draw on for her writing.

St
I go tu the pug
stesto jos en i
en i go tu mi F
nit en I go tu
mi jos.¹

1. I believe this says,
market] and I go to
to my grandma ho
house and spend th
then I go to my ho

Figure 8.1 Responses to the prompt “What did you do this weekend?”

Age and pri

The demand
Writing tas
however, th
progressed
grades. Suc
have had th
ing skills be
ple, for a 5t
10- or 11-ye
writing ins
glish profic
edge about
they know

**Theore
Writing**

One major
second lan
second lan

Student A

I go tu the puga en i go tu mi
stesto jos en i go tu mi gamo jos
en i go tu mi fen jos en spn the
nit en I go tu pore den i go tu
mi jos.¹

1. I believe this says, "I go to the pulga [flea market] and I go to my sister house and I go to my grandma house and I go to my friend house and spend the night and I go to party then I go to my house."

Student B

This Friday i do my homework and
wend i finchis my mom need help to
do the tortillas to send en Mexico.
Then wend my fahre get home wih
my sisteher Mariana my mom med riec
with milk and same time my great gran
mother she meke os my mom then niting
i went to bed and i went to seelp.

This Saturday in tha mornig i se
carates and is april fool day. Then late
time my famaly and i went mall to buy
some. Then the nitgh i read the book
and is great then went to seelp.

And This Sunday i was sike and my
siste curde me and I was felen good
and tehn i tro up. Then at leat my
fattrer just came home. My motrer
made pinchillo-wit rice. Then at niting y
went to seelp.

Figure 8.1 Responses by 2nd grade Spanish-speaking ELLs to the prompt, "What did you do this weekend?"

Age and prior knowledge impact ELLs' writing ability in English.

The demands and expectations for writing increase substantially by grade level. Writing tasks must be appropriate to the age and grade level of students. Notice, however, that "grade-level appropriateness" assumes that students have already progressed through English writing instruction and development in previous grades. Such an assumption cannot be made for newcomer ELLs, who may not have had the opportunity to attend school or develop strong native language writing skills before coming to the United States. Thus, what is appropriate, for example, for a 5th grade student born in the United States may not be appropriate for a 10- or 11-year-old refugee ELL student from Somalia. Teachers need to differentiate writing instruction for these students, ensuring that it is appropriate to their English proficiency and writing development level. Writing also requires prior knowledge about topic and genre. Students cannot be expected to write about a topic they know little about in a genre they do not know.

Theoretical Frameworks for Writing Research and Instruction

One major challenge in teaching ELL students to write in English is that the field of second language writing is relatively new and we lack a comprehensive theory of second language writing. Before the 1960s, ESL instruction focused on oral lan-

guage. The first textbooks on ESL writing did not appear until the 1990s; the first academic journal on the subject, the *Journal of Second Language Writing*, appeared in 1992. Ferris and Hedgcock (2004) describe how research, theory, and practice in ESL writing has evolved since 1966 in four different areas of focus (see Table 8.1; see also Raimes, 1991). Much of this work parallels developments in first language writing, and each focus is aligned with a particular school of thought, though there is considerable overlap among them. As Paul L. Matsuda (2003) asserts, no single theory from a single discipline can account for the wide variety of processes involved in second language writing. Teachers need to understand different theories for both L1 and L2 writing, and the broad range of instructional issues for classroom writing.

Acknowledging that incompatibilities between different theories and practices can cause confusion for teachers, Ferris and Hedgcock (2004) recommend that teachers consider the following components related to the writing process when reviewing research and theory and making decisions about their classroom writing instruction:

- *The ESL writer.* The writer as a person—that is, his or her personal knowledge, attitudes, learning styles, cultural orientation, language proficiency, and motivation, in addition to his or her composing strategies.
- *The native English speaker reader as the ESL writer's primary audience.* The

Table 8.1 Evolution of ESL Writing Research, Theory, and Practice

Focus	Description	Instructional Practices
Form and "current-traditional rhetoric," 1966–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form-focused orientation in L2 writing (influenced by the audiolingual approach) • Writing to reinforce patterns of language taught and to test students' application of grammar rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing well-formed sentences • Narrow paragraph or essay assignments to practice particular syntactic patterns
The writer: expressionism and cognitivism, 1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on what writers actually do as they write; the process and stages writers go through from conceptualization to publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process writing • Writer's Workshop
Content and the disciplines, 1986–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the need of ESL writers to compose texts for academic readers • Focus on writing academic genres needed by ESL students for their majors or academic courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English for specific purposes (ESP) • English for academic purposes (EAP)
The reader: social constructionism, 1986–	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on socializing and apprenticing the writer as a member of one or more academic discourse communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction that prepares students to anticipate and satisfy the demands of academic readers. • Highly compatible with content-based approaches to ESL

Source: Adapted from Ferris and Hedgcock, 2004, pp. 7–8.

Relati

Research
ity and th
els, the m
edge, in t
more stud
hensive th

Hude
ronmenta
in lists, le
people re
meaning
different
role of sto
The stude
understan
this know

Readi
as they ga
ing is teach
support E
topic to w
for My Mo
to buy a c
The stude
ing money
troversial
and expre
mation ar
ple, if stu
their pare
include in
writing fe
to include
other than
book such
tention to

1: See, e.g., Ca

il the 1990s; the first
ge Writing, appeared
eory, and practice in
cus (see Table 8.1; see
nts in first language
ought, though there
03) asserts, no single
iety of processes in-
nd different theories
onal issues for class-

t theories and prac-
(2004) recommend
the writing process
out their classroom

her personal knowl-
language proficiency,
tegies.

mary audience. The

ctice

onal Practices

well-formed sen-

paragraph or essay
nts to practice
ar syntactic pat-

writing
Workshop

for specific pur-
(ESP)
for academic pur-
(AP)

ion that prepares
s to anticipate and
he demands of
ic readers.
compatible with
based approaches

native English-speaking reader's needs and expectations as a respondent or evaluator of the ESL students' written products.

- *The writer's text.* The writer's product as represented by its purposes, characteristics, and constituent elements—genre, rhetorical form, discursive mode, features of coherence and cohesion, syntactic properties, lexicon, mechanics, print-code features, and so on.
- *The contexts for writing.* Cultural, political, social, economic, situational, and physical dimensions of the text.
- *The interaction of all of these components in authentic educational settings.* (p. 9)

Relationship between Reading and Writing

Researchers have found a strong relationship between ELL students' reading ability and their writing ability in English.¹ The more students read at appropriate levels, the more vocabulary and language structures they will acquire. This knowledge, in turn, can be used in their writing. Findings from research reveal that the more students read, the more they write, the better they write, and the less apprehensive they are about writing (Krashen, n.d.).

Hudelson (1989) observes that when young ELL students are exposed to environmental print, such as traffic signs, store names, product names, logos, and print in lists, letters, brochures, books, and magazines, they come to understand that people read different kinds of materials for different purposes, that print carries meaning and that it makes sense. This understanding enables young ELLs to write different kinds of texts for different purposes. Hudelson also notes the important role of storybook reading with young ELLs to support their writing development. The students learn how to handle books, learn about story elements, and begin to understand the concepts of letter, word, sentence, and directionality. They take this knowledge developed from their reading and apply it to their writing.

Reading becomes more and more important to students' writing development as they gain greater proficiency in English. Kroll (1993) asserts that teaching writing is teaching reading (and vice versa). She notes three ways in which reading can support ELL students' writing. First readings can be used as a springboard for a topic to write about. For example, a teacher might read to the class the book *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams, which describes a family's effort to save money to buy a comfortable chair for their apartment after losing their furniture in a fire. The students might then be encouraged to write about their own experiences saving money to buy something special. Short newspaper or magazine articles on controversial topics can be effective in motivating older students to write a response and express their own opinions. Second, readings can provide background information and source material for students to write about a specific topic. For example, if students write reports about their home country (or the home country of their parents), they can read related books and articles to find facts and details to include in their writing. Finally, readings can be used as a model of a particular writing feature for students to imitate. For example, if a teacher wants his students to include more dialogue in their stories using quotation marks and using words other than just *said* before or after each quotation, he could read with students a book such as *Arthur and the Lost Diary* by Marc Brown and draw the students' attention to the skillful way in which the author uses dialogue in his stories. Students

1: See, e.g., Carson & Leki, 1993; Grabe, 2003; Hudelson, 1989; Krashen, 2004b; Kroll, 1990, 1993; Vandrick, 2003.

could then practice imitating Brown's style and then integrate it into their own writing to create dialogues.

Effective teachers understand this strong relationship between reading and writing. They find creative ways to integrate reading and writing instruction across content areas. They provide meaningful instruction, guidance, and activities for students to use reading to further develop their writing ability.

Stages in ELL Writing Development

Several researchers have attempted to identify the stages ELLs may go through in their early writing development, noting that these stages are similar to those native English speaker writers go through.² Katherine Davies Samway (2006) lists six stages (Table 8.2). But she urges caution, pointing out that ELL students' writing development is not necessarily linear and varies from student to student, even when they speak the same L1 and have had similar amounts of exposure to instruction in English. She notes that quality and quantity may vary from piece to piece and draft to draft for the same writer and that some students may skip stages.

Students' writing often reflects their confidence and engagement as writers. Some students may write only words they already know how to spell. But as they gain more confidence in their writing, they start to take risks by including words they cannot spell correctly yet. To include these words, they approximate the spelling, using their knowledge of sound-symbol correspondence—a process teachers call invented spelling, or developmental spelling. Some adults worry that such spelling is a regression in the students' writing ability. Some accuse that teachers who allow students to use invented spelling are lazy and are harming students by not demanding standardized spelling and correcting their spelling errors. For this reason, some teachers may be afraid to send student writing home or display it on classroom walls if it contains invented spelling. It is also assumed that spelling tests are needed to help students learn how to spell words correctly (see Box 8.1).

Opposition to invented spelling shows ignorance of the development of children's writing. As Samway notes, it actually reveals the students' growth as writers. Invented spelling reflects knowledge of phonics but also demonstrates the limitations of phonics to help students determine a word's standardized spelling (e.g., Why isn't *said* spelled *sed*?). Many educators prefer to call invented spelling *temporary* or *transitional spelling*, because it truly is temporary. As students read and write more, and as teachers provide supportive writing instruction and practice, their spelling becomes more standardized (as shown in Table 8.2). And at some stages in the writing process, correcting spelling errors is appropriate.

Promoting Writing Development for ELLs in the Classroom

To ensure that ELLs learn to write for social and academic purposes, sheltered instruction and ESL teachers need to know their ELL students' strengths and needs in second language writing and have a clear idea of what they want their students to know and be able to do with writing as a result of their instruction. Teachers draw on their understanding of writing development for ELLs and select appropriate strategies to scaffold students' learning, differentiate instruction based on the

2: See, e.g., Hadaway et al., 2002; Peregoy & Boyle, 2004; Samway, 2006.

Table 8.2 Dev

Scribble writing (and drawing)

Strings of letters

Letters representing whole words or thoughts

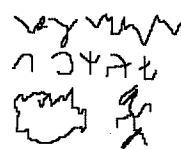
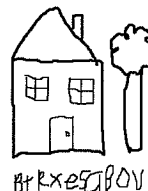

Stylized sentences

Emerging standardized writing

Standardized writing

Source: Adapted from

Table 8.2 Developmental Stages in Early ELL Student Writing

Scribble writing (and drawing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scribbles often reflect the orthography of the native language. • Letters are often approximations of standardized letters. • Scribbles for writing and drawing are often differentiated. 	
Strings of letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no sound-symbol correspondence. • Numbers and other symbols are often interspersed. • Spacing between letters is often absent. 	
Letters representing whole words or thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some sound-symbol correspondence. • There are some correctly spelled words, which are usually sight words and high frequency words that may be displayed in the classroom. • Some spacing appears between words (and sometimes between letters). • There is a simple message, which is often in the form of a label. • Pictures are often as important as the writing. • As first, writers of English tend to capture beginning consonants, then ending consonants, then medial consonants, and finally vowels. • At this state, students may have difficulty reading their own texts. 	
Stylized sentences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing is often patterned (e.g., This is a . . . ; This is a . . .) • Writers may rely on familiar words, often those displayed in the classroom. • Texts become longer and include more conventional spelling. • Students can usually read their own writing. 	<p>I see a hat. I see a dog. I see a cat. I see a man. I see a car and a tree and a house.</p>
Emerging standardized writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages are longer, often reflecting the writer's eagerness to focus on quantity (frequent use of <i>and then</i> . . .) • Punctuation may not be used conventionally. • Spelling may become more unconventional as the writer takes more risks in incorporating less familiar or frequently occurring words. • If L1 uses the same alphabet as English, and the student is literate in L1, some spelling may be based on the sound system of the L1. 	<p>After dad I wend to the truck so we can go to church. Den chur was ofer. So we go to the park ten we go to the house afther tha a went to sleep beacouse eat was geatheang dark.</p>
Standardized writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing is better organized and more focused. • Word choice is more varied and voice is more apparent. • Spelling is more standardized, except when writers are using unfamiliar vocabulary. • Punctuation is more conventional and varied. 	<p>The gratest memory with my family is when me and my family had a vacation to Galveston. I was so excited to go and to swim in the water. We all packed our close snaks and some food to eat. While my dad was driving I couldn't stop thinking of the fun we are going to through. After we go their we went to a store full of swimig suits sandals water volley balls and a lot of more stuff. Each of us bot swimming suits.</p>

Source: Adapted from Samway, 2006, pp. 38–43.

(Starting, Emerging, Developing, Expanding, and Bridging), across five grade-level bands (pre-K-K, 1-3, 4-5, 6-8, and 9-12), and across five standards (social, intercultural, and instructional language; language arts; mathematics; science; and social studies). Rather than provide generic descriptions, the TESOL standards offer sample performance indicators for different topics within the five standards. These standards give teachers at specific grade levels a clear understanding of what can be reasonably expected of students in the area of writing for social, intercultural, and instructional purposes and across four content areas, and also what instruction and guidance will be needed to help students move up to the next level. Consider for example, the sample performance indicator in Figure 8.3 for writing for grades 4-5 in the area of social studies under the topic of immigration. Note that the level of difficulty of the writing task increases as the level of support decreases for each subsequent proficiency level. As these examples illustrate, ELLs progress through different stages and levels within their English language writing development but this development is not necessarily linear. Furthermore, researchers and states have different ways of identifying and defining these stages and for determining when ELLs are at one stage or another.

As a teacher, it is important to understand how your state defines these stages or levels, because they are used for accountability purposes. But you should also be familiar with other ELL writing development frameworks outlined by researchers or by TESOL (2006a). Most important, teachers need to know how to use the frameworks to understand the writing development of their ELL students and help them develop the knowledge and skills they need. They also need to provide the students with ample opportunities for authentic writing. These frameworks can guide teachers' efforts to help ELLs progress to the next stage or level, with the ultimate goal of being designated as proficient writers in English.

Writing to, with, and by ELLs

Like reading *to*, *with*, and *by* ELLs, writing *to*, *with*, and *by* ELLs allows teachers to model and scaffold the writing process to help ELL students become confident and skilled independent writers. Writing *to* ELLs includes modeled writing, and writing *with* ELLs includes interactive, shared, and guided writing. Writing *by* ELLs includes independent writing, such as journals, and Writer's Workshop.

Modeled Writing

Teachers demonstrate the writing process through modeled writing, producing a text in enlarged print on a writing easel, white board, chalk board, overhead projector or on a computer projected on a screen so that all the students can see the text as it is being written. This process is particularly important for ELLs, because they may lack models of proficient English writing at home.

In modeled writing, the teacher controls the pen and composes and writes the text on her own. As she writes, she thinks aloud. Suppose the teacher wants to model how to write a letter to her friend. Some of her comments as she thinks aloud might include the following:

- When I write a letter, I know the first thing I need is the date. I know I need to write that in the middle. First I need to put the month, then the day, then a comma, and then the year. So here at the middle of the top I'm going to write . . .
- Next I need my greeting. I'll skip a line and start writing that here on the left. I'm writing to my friend *Phuong*, so I'll write "Dear *Phuong*." I know *Dear* needs to start with a capital *D*, and I also need a capital *P* because *Phuong* is a name. I also remember that I need to put a comma at the end of my greeting.

(text continues on page 216)

BEGINNING

Beginning English language learners lack the English vocabulary and grasp of English language structures necessary to address grade-appropriate writing tasks meaningfully.

These students

- have little or no ability to use the English language to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content-area instruction
- lack the English necessary to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing (e.g., focus and coherence, conventions, organization, voice, and development of ideas) in English

Typical writing features at this level

- ability to label, list, and copy
- high-frequency words/phrases and short, simple sentences (or even short paragraphs) based primarily on recently practiced, memorized, or highly familiar material; this type of writing may be quite accurate
- present tense used primarily
- frequent primary language features (spelling patterns, word order, literal translations, and words from the student's primary language) and other errors associated with second language acquisition may significantly hinder or prevent understanding, even for individuals accustomed to the writing of English language learners (ELLs)

INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate English language learners have enough English vocabulary and enough grasp of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks in a limited way.

These students

- have a limited ability to use the English language to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content-area instruction
- are limited in their ability to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing in English; communicate best when topics are highly familiar and concrete, and require simple, high-frequency English

Typical writing features at this level

- simple, original messages consisting of short, simple sentences; frequent inaccuracies occur when creating or taking risks beyond familiar English
- high-frequency vocabulary; academic writing often has an oral tone
- loosely connected text with limited use of cohesive devices or repetitive use, which may cause gaps in meaning
- repetition of ideas due to lack of vocabulary and language structures
- present tense used most accurately; simple future and past tenses, if attempted, are used inconsistently or with frequent inaccuracies
- descriptions, explanations, and narrations lacking detail; difficulty expressing abstract ideas
- primary language features and errors associated with second language acquisition may be frequent
- some writing may be understood only by individuals accustomed to the writing of ELLs; parts of the writing may be hard to understand even for individuals accustomed to the writing of ELLs

ADVANCED

Advanced English language learners have enough English vocabulary and enough grasp of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks meaningfully.

These students

- are able to use the English language to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content-area instruction
- know enough English to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing in English, although acquisition support is needed when topics are abstract, challenging, or unfamiliar

Typical writing features at this level

- grasp of basic verbs, sentence features, and sentence structure; grasp of more complex grammar features, and academic writing has an oral tone
- emerging grade-appropriate academic writing has an oral tone
- use of a variety of cohesive devices, although some redundancy may occur
- narrations, explanations, and descriptions developed in some detail; clarity; quality or quantity of abstract ideas are evident; demands are high, and vocabulary is required
- occasional second language errors
- communications are understood by individuals not accustomed to the writing of ELLs

Figure 8.2 Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) Proficiency Level Descriptors, Grades 2–12 Writing. (Source: Texas Education Agency, 2008, p. 4. Available at www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/admin/rpte/telpasrater/spring2008pld.pdf)

Figure 8.2 (cont.)

DIATE

language learners have
y and enough grasp
ures to address
tasks in a limited

use the English
as in writing and
grade-appropriate
content-area

y to develop or
f grade-appropriate
communicate best when
and concrete, and
quency English

this level

es consisting of short,
ent inaccuracies
aking risks beyond

ry; academic writing

with limited use of
titive use, which may

o lack of vocabulary

accurately; simple
attempted, are used
quent inaccuracies
ns, and narrations
expressing abstract

es and errors
language acquisition

derstood only by
to the writing of
g may be hard to
viduals accustomed

ADVANCED

Advanced English language learners have enough English vocabulary and command of English language structures to address grade-appropriate writing tasks, although second language acquisition support is needed.

These students

- are able to use the English language, with second language acquisition support, to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content-area instruction
- know enough English to be able to develop or demonstrate elements of grade-appropriate writing in English, although second language acquisition support is particularly needed when topics are abstract, academically challenging, or unfamiliar

Typical writing features at this level

- grasp of basic verbs, tenses, grammar features, and sentence patterns; partial grasp of more complex verbs, tenses, grammar features, and sentence patterns
- emerging grade-appropriate vocabulary; academic writing has a more academic tone
- use of a variety of common cohesive devices, although some redundancy may occur
- narrations, explanations, and descriptions developed in some detail with emerging clarity; quality or quantity declines when abstract ideas are expressed, academic demands are high, or low-frequency vocabulary is required
- occasional second language acquisition errors
- communications are usually understood by individuals not accustomed to the writing of ELLs

ADVANCED HIGH

Advanced high English language learners have acquired the English vocabulary and command of English language structures necessary to address grade-appropriate writing tasks with minimal second language acquisition support.

These students

- are able to use the English language, with minimal second language acquisition support, to express ideas in writing and engage meaningfully in grade-appropriate writing assignments in content-area instruction
- know enough English to be able to develop or demonstrate, with minimal second language acquisition support, elements of grade-appropriate writing in English

Typical writing features at this level

- nearly comparable to writing of native English-speaking peers in clarity and precision with regards to English vocabulary and language structures, with occasional exceptions when writing about academically complex ideas, abstract ideas, or topics requiring low-frequency vocabulary
- occasional difficulty with naturalness of phrasing and expression
- errors associated with second language acquisition are minor and usually limited to low-frequency words and structures; errors rarely interfere with communication

Standard 5 Language of Social Studies

Grade level cluster: 4-5

Domain: Writing

Topic: Immigration

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
List family members or historical figures with countries of origin, using maps or charts.	Create personal or historical family trees using graphic organizers and photographs.	Produce illustrated family or group histories through albums, journals, diaries, or travelogues.	Research (e.g., by conducting interviews) and report family or historical journeys.	Discuss, in paragraph form, cause and effect, historical patterns, or impact of movement of peoples from nation to nation.

Figure 8.3 TESOL ELP Standards, sample performance indicators for writing. (Source: TESOL, 2006a, p. 77.)

- Now I'm ready to start my letter. I need to indent so . . .

In addition to talking about conventions and style, the teacher also talks about content. For example:

- I want to tell my friend about a great movie I saw yesterday, so I think first I'll tell her I saw a great movie, and then in the next sentence I'll tell her the name of it.

As she writes she can talk about grammar decisions:

- This is a movie I watched yesterday, so I need to use the past tense. "I saw a great movie yesterday."

The teacher can also discuss decisions about vocabulary and can even model making changes while writing to make better choices:

- I think I need a better word than *great* to describe the movie because I loved it so much. I think I'll use the word *awesome* instead [crosses out *great* and writes *awesome*]. Oh, and now I need to change *a* to *an* because *awesome* begins with a vowel. "I saw an awesome movie yesterday."

And she can also discuss her use of punctuation:

- To make this sentence sound more like how I would say it in an excited way, I'm going to change this period to an explanation point: "I saw an awesome movie yesterday!"

Modeled writing, as shown here, is an effective tool for teaching new vocabulary to ELLs within this meaningful and authentic context. If necessary, the teacher could draw simple pictures next to some new vocabulary words in the text to remind students of the meanings.

The text in modeled writing should be kept brief. Teachers should ensure that the complexity and vocabulary of the text is appropriate to the proficiency of their ELL students. They should focus on genres and key skills they want their students to learn and use in their own writing. The topics for modeled writing could be tied into themes or topics being studied in class, or even extensions of read-alouds or shared readings. For example, through modeled writing, the teacher could demonstrate writing a summary of the story or a science report or a persuasive essay. Many elementary school teachers incorporate modeled writing into their daily

opening ro
about what
tence such

Once m
classroom.
that studen

Shared W

Shared writ
dents write
and acts as
about the c
help compo
English pro
say and hov
and strateg
she writes.
trip to the
they house
she could p

- "We
tense
■ Was t
■ We n
"the"

Like model
lary and gr
teacher can
contribute
such guida
story as, "W
like these a
ing beyond
the class's c

The top
current the
ings, or des
writing is a
expected to
strategies o
ple, if it bec
future tense
ing an upco
spring brea

Shared
the prewrit
tween idea
they will ne
their field t
organizer b
Figure 8.4).

Level 5

Discuss, in paragraph form, cause and effect, historical patterns, or impact of movement of peoples from nation to nation.

s for writing. (Source:

cher also talks about

day, so I think first I'll
e I'll tell her the name

e past tense. "I saw a

can even model mak-

movie because I loved
crosses out *great* and
an because *awesome*
y."

y it in an excited way,
t: "I saw an awesome

ng new vocabulary to
ary, the teacher could
he text to remind stu-

rs should ensure that
ne proficiency of their
y want their students
writing could be tied
ons of read-alouds or
teacher could demon-
or a persuasive essay.
iting into their daily

opening routine by writing morning messages. These typically tell the students about what they are going to be doing in class that day and thus may include a sentence such as, "Today we are going to the library to check out books."

Once modeled writing texts are complete, they should be kept on display in the classroom. Students can refer to them as they write. They also make engaging texts that students will want to read during independent reading time.

Shared Writing

Shared writing is similar to modeled writing, except that in shared writing, the students write *with* the teacher to help compose the text. The teacher controls the pen and acts as the scribe, allowing the students to dictate the text and make decisions about the content, vocabulary, conventions, grammar, and style. Having students help compose the text ensures that it is comprehensible at their current level of English proficiency. The teacher, however, does not just write whatever students say and how they say it, errors and all. Rather, she serves as a guide, sharing ideas and strategies to ensure appropriate vocabulary and correct sentence structure as she writes. For example, suppose the class is composing a text describing their field trip to the zoo, and a student suggests adding to a story, "We see monkey play in they house." The teacher could accept this addition but before or during writing she could prompt the students to help fix up the sentence:

- "We went to the zoo last week." Do we need to use the present or the past tense? What's the past tense of *see*?
- Was there more than one monkey? OK, so what is the plural form of *monkey*?
- We need a word before "monkeys." We saw [pause to allow the students to say "the"] monkeys.

Like modeled writing, shared writing is an effective tool for teaching new vocabulary and grammar to ELLs within a meaningful context. Here, for example, the teacher can teach the word *cage* to replace the word *house*. The teacher could also contribute to the sentence by suggesting "playing around" to replace "play." With such guidance, the student's initial suggestion is further crafted and added to the story as, "We saw the monkeys playing around in their cage." By asking questions like these and providing guidance, the teacher enables students to engage in writing beyond their independent writing level, that is, the teacher is able to scaffold the class's composition of well-written text.

The topics for shared writing, like those for modeled writing, could include current themes and topics, extensions of books from read-alouds and shared readings, or descriptions of shared experiences, such as an assembly or field trip. Shared writing is also an excellent way to introduce and practice a genre students will be expected to write independently, and an effective way for a teacher to focus on strategies or skills she notices are lacking in the students' own writing. For example, if it becomes evident from student journals that many are struggling with the future tense, the teacher could guide students in the composition of a text describing an upcoming activity or holiday that requires the use of this tense (e.g., "During spring break, I am going camping. I will go fishing with my dad.").

Shared writing should also incorporate the use of graphic organizers to model the prewriting stage. Graphic organizers can help students see relationships between ideas before they write and also help them generate ideas and vocabulary they will need for the writing. For example, suppose the class wanted to write about their field trip to the park. Together the teacher and students could create a graphic organizer by talking about and listing the different things they did at the park (see Figure 8.4). More details could be added to each of the three main activities. For

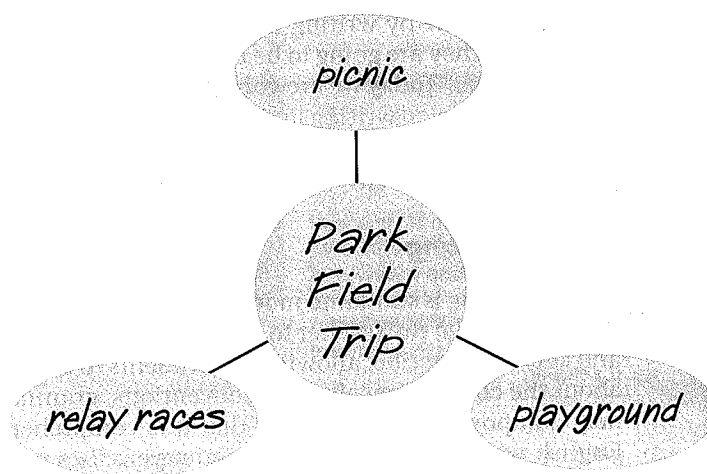


Figure 8.4 Prewriting graphic organizer created during shared writing

example, from picnic, the class could add circles for the different things they ate: sandwiches, chips, apples, and cookies. Then, the students could use this graphic organizer as they compose their shared writing text. Creating a graphic organizer also models for students the prewriting process they should use in their own writing.

Guided Writing

There are varying definitions and descriptions of guided writing, but all include the teacher guiding students through a particular writing activity designed to address an area of need within students' writing development. Typically guided writing starts with a mini-lesson on some aspect of writing. Students then practice the writing principle or strategy they were just taught, under the teacher's supervision, and then share their final written projects.

For example, when I noticed that many of my students were not using adjectives and that therefore their writing was very plain, I created a guided writing activity on adjectives. Our theme for the month was animals. I made a chart with the students, recreated in Figure 8.5. First I had students brainstorm a list of animals and then a list of words we could use to describe these animals (adjectives). Next we brainstormed a list of things these animals could do (verbs) and then the places where they might do these things. As we brainstormed these words, we talked about each one to make sure everyone understood them. Through this process, the students were learning vocabulary in a meaningful context.

Once our chart was completed, I called on a student to choose one animal and put a sticky note by its name (e.g., *monkey*). Next, students chose three adjectives from our list to describe the monkey (e.g., *hairy*, *playful*, and *wild*), and then a verb (e.g., *swings*), and finally the place (e.g., *jungle*). With all their choices marked, we read our full sentence: "The hairy, playful, wild monkey swings in the jungle." To liven it up, and as an additional support, we sang our new sentence to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell."

The hairy, playful monkey.

The hairy, playful monkey.

The hairy, playful, wild monkey swings in the jungle.

By now the students were anxious to create other sentences to read and sing, coming up with such jewels as "The yellow, dangerous, slimy snake crawls in the forest" and "The hairy, ugly, smelly dog sleeps in the house."

Figure 8.

Once
desks to w
tant writer
read them
for studen
writing ac
jectives in

Interacti

Interactiv
pose the t
It is excell
writing an
dence. It c
L1 literacy
could be a
a morning
pose toget
can fly. Us
what they
name of a
teacher co
a sentence
could then
sky." The t
a single se

In pre
taking car
punctuat

The teach
tence as if
helps the
students fi



Adjective	Animal	Verb	Preposition	Place
hairy	bird	runs		house
yellow	dog	swings		jungle
beautiful	monkey	jumps		cage
fluffy	cat	eats		zoo
white	horse	crawls		water
The dangerous	turtle	sings	in the	field
ugly	cow	sleeps		farm
slimy	scorpion	flies		park
playful	spider	drives		barn
smelly	snake	bites		forest
wild	shark	plays		lake

Figure 8.5 Animal adjectives poster

Once we completed a few sentences together, the students were sent to their desks to write their own sentences from the chart. Everyone, including my reluctant writers, quickly filled up their papers with sentences. When they finished, they read them to each other or to the whole class. We kept our chart up for several weeks for students to read and refer to when doing their own writing. I knew this guided writing activity had been successful when I noticed students were using more adjectives in their journals and other writing.

Interactive Writing

Interactive writing is like shared writing because the students and teacher compose the text together. In interactive writing, however, the students share the pen. It is excellent technique for young ELL students who are at the beginning stage of writing and learning the alphabet, letter formation, and letter-sound correspondence. It can also be used with older newcomer ELLs, particularly those who lack L1 literacy skills. The teacher begins by guiding the class to form a sentence. It could be a sentence related to a current theme, an extension of a book read-aloud, a morning message, or the beginning of a story or other genre the class will compose together. Suppose, for example, the students are learning about animals that can fly. Using interactive writing, the students will write sentences demonstrating what they know about flying animals. The teacher could ask, "Who can tell me the name of an animal that can fly?" After listening to students' suggestions, the teacher could say, "OK, let's pick one of those animals. How about a bat? Let's make a sentence. *A bat . . .*" Then the students could join in "*. . . can fly.*" The teacher could then ask, "Where does the bat fly?" The students would likely suggest, "in the sky." The teacher could then prompt students to put all the information together in a single sentence: "A bat can fly in the sky."

In preparation for writing this sentence, the teacher draws a line for each word, taking care to make the lines about the length of each word and adding the ending punctuation:

The teacher then points to each blank line, prompting the students read the sentence as if the words were already written. Then, one word at a time, the teacher helps the students say the word slowly, listening for the letters they need. As the students figure out the letters, the teacher asks for volunteers to come up and write

the next letter in the word. For example, the teacher might ask, "What letter does *bat* start with?" The teacher can then hand the pen to a student who suggests the letter *b*. If the student is unsure how to write the letter *b* the teacher can model it for him on a small white board or chalk board. Interactive writing is an effective way to teach phonics in a meaningful context because it allows teachers to teach the exact letter-sound correspondences students need to create their message.

When students are at this stage, the teacher should not worry about handwriting. If a student makes a mistake, the teacher can simply cover the error with a sticky note to mask it (some teachers call this a "band-aid"), and then the student can make the correction on top. As each word is completed, the students read it aloud and then go back to the beginning of the sentence and read up to the next word they need to add. This process continues until the sentence is complete, at which point they go back and read the entire sentence.

A sentence created this way could be the basis for a classroom book. The teacher could ask one or two students to illustrate the page. After a week or so of interactive writing on flying animals, with illustrations added, the students will have enough to put together into a book that can be used for shared reading, placed in the classroom library for students to read during silent reading time, or checked out by students to take home and read to their families. Interactive writing texts can also be displayed on the walls for students to read and refer to when writing on their own.

When I did interactive writing with my beginning-level writers, I found they got a little bored waiting for a turn to come up and write a letter or word. To solve this problem, I gave each student an individual white board and a marker and eraser. That way they were able to write along and get their own practice writing each letter and word.

As students progress in their writing, they can contribute entire words, and the texts can get longer and more complex.

Journals

Modeled writing, interactive writing, shared writing, and guided writing all provide scaffolding to help ELLs develop as writers and are forms of writing *to* and *with* ELLs. Independent writing is writing *by* ELLs. Teachers support independent writing by providing opportunities for students to write, to practice what they have learned, and to move up through the stages of writing development. Journals are an outstanding way to support this development. Each student is given an empty notebook and time to write in it every day; students include the date on each entry. Time allotted to journal writing can vary from 10 minutes to 30 minutes a day; older and more proficient writers may be given more time.

There are two general views about journal writing. One is that students should be free to write about anything they like, and the other is that teachers should assign a topic or use a prompt. A colleague of mine once showed me a journal entry from one of her 2nd-grade students, a girl who probably had been writing in her journal daily since kindergarten:

I have nothing left to write about. I'm only 7 years old, and not that much stuff has happened to me yet.

As this young girl reminds us, students may need some guidance to generate topics they can write about. One technique is to do a shared writing activity during which students brainstorm a list of topics they could write about. The list of topics might include: my favorite TV show, my favorite cartoon or movie, foods I like or hate, my family, what I like or don't like about school, something funny that happened to me, a time I was really scared, what I want to be when I grow up, problems in our school or neighborhood, if I were President, and so on. A group of students

can quickly
so students
Sometim
students to
order to go

I like to
I like to
I like to
I like to
I like to

And off to
stage demo
with a bit
ized writin
prompt ide
would you
want to sty
topics, so I
read it wit
about som
loved the p
break ther
respond to
standardi

As a g
however, t
to give thi
the teach
comes a
teacher. T
their jour

Note
at the em
Note also
vides a fo
in Chapt
with, play
(went), th

i go
i pl
it f

I'm g
fun.

Figure 8

"What letter does
t who suggests the
er can model it for
is an effective way
chers to teach the
r message.

ry about handwrit-
er the error with a
d then the student
ne students read it
ead up to the next
nce is complete, at

a book. The teacher
or so of interactive
s will have enough
placed in the class-
checked out by stu-
g texts can also be
iting on their own.
riters, I found they
r or word. To solve
and a marker and
n practice writing

tire words, and the

ed writing all pro-
writing *to* and *with*
independent writ-
ce what they have
ment. Journals are
is given an empty
date on each entry.
30 minutes a day;

at students should
teachers should as-
me a journal entry
been writing in her

has happened to me yet.

idance to generate
ting activity during
ut. The list of topics
ovie, foods I like or
ng funny that hap-
grow up, problems
A group of students

can quickly fill up a large chart with their ideas. The chart can be posted on the wall so students can refer to it when looking for ideas.

Sometimes further guidance may be necessary. Once, in an effort to get my students to write more, I made a rule that they must write at least five sentences in order to go to recess. No problem, my students figured out:

I like to play.
I like to eat.
I like to run.
I like to jump.
I like to sleep.

And off to recess they went! They seemed to be stuck at the *stylized sentence writing stage* demonstrated in Table 8.2, but I knew they were capable of doing more and, with a bit more motivation and guidance, could move into the *emerging standardized writing stage*. At our local teacher supply store, I found a little booklet of writing prompt ideas. It had goofy prompts, such as, "If an alien came to your house, what would you do?" and "If you had a million dollars, what would you buy?" I didn't want to stymie my students who were already producing good writing on their own topics, so I decided each day I would put up a prompt on the overhead projector and read it with the students but give them the option of responding to it or writing about something else of their own choosing. It was an instant success; students loved the prompts and were excited to respond to them. The new system helped to break them free from writing isolated lists of sentences. Even when they did not respond to the prompt, they began to write more in the prose style of the emerging standardized writing stage on their own topics.

As a general rule, journal writing should not be corrected. This does not mean, however, that teachers cannot provide corrective feedback. The most effective way to give this feedback is to make the journals interactive between the student and the teacher. These are also called dialogue journals. In this manner, writing becomes a means for authentic communication between the students and their teacher. The teacher reads the students' entries and then writes back to them in their journal, responding to their writing (see Figure 8.6).

Note that the student whose journal entry appears in Figure 8.6 appears to be at the emerging standardized writing stage and is relying on invented spelling. Note also that the teacher does not correct all of the errors directly but instead provides a form of corrective feedback. This process is similar to oral recasts, described in Chapter 6. Embedded in this response are the correct spellings for *Chuck-E-Cheese*, *with*, *played*, *some*, *video*, and *games*, as well as a model of the past tense of *go* (*went*), the plural form of *game* (*games*), and the need for the verb *was* before *fun*.

i goed to chke chz wit my mom
i ply sum vdo game
it fun

I'm glad you went to Chuck-E-Cheese with your mom. I bet it was fun. I like to play video games too!

Figure 8.6 Interaction between the student and teacher in a dialogue journal

Also modeled are proper capitalization and ending punctuation and running prose, with each sentence following the next rather than starting on a new line. Students may not be ready to learn all of these points at once. But the next time this student wants to write about Chuck-E-Cheese or video games, he is likely to flip back to this page to get the correct spelling from the teacher's response. He may also start capitalizing *I* and use ending punctuation. As he progresses, he will pick up more and more from the teacher's responses.

One exciting thing about journals is that they are a living record of students' writing development over the course of the school year. I gave students a new journal every month and then labeled their old journals with the name of the month and dropped them into their portfolios. The completed journals were very effective measures of the students' growth, and I showed them to students and parents during conferences: "Here's how Gabriela was writing at the beginning of the year, and here is what her writing looks like now! Notice how much she has improved in . . ."

Besides documenting students' progress in writing development, journals reveal their strengths and areas in need of improvement, allowing teachers when they read the daily entries to quickly ascertain the strategies and skills they need to focus on in shared and modeled writing, and the types of lessons needed in guided writing. Teachers can also pinpoint skills needed just by a small number of students and thus can develop mini-lessons just for these students. Journal writing can be used for formative assessment.

Process Writing and Writer's Workshop

Process writing involves guiding students through the writing process in stages, helping them to focus first on ideas and to take care of corrections related to grammar, spelling, and mechanics toward the end. Process writing generally has five stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. These stages were identified in the 1970s when writing research began to focus on how successful writers produce a text from its conceptualization to its final publication (see Table 8.1). One finding was that successful writers concentrate first on their ideas rather than worrying about having perfect spelling, grammar, and mechanics, otherwise their writing would suffer. Process writing works especially well for ELL students. "Correctness" is a challenge for them, but students are still capable of expressing their ideas in writing in less than fluent English (Samway, 2006). Once the students' ideas are down on paper, teachers can provide instruction and scaffolding to help them improve their writing as they go through the rest of the writing process. Teachers often teach process writing through a collaborative approach called Writer's Workshop, which involves the following activities at each stage:

Prewriting. Students get their ideas together, determine the purpose of the writing, and identify who the audience will be (e.g., "My purpose is to tell about my sister's wedding, and my audience is my teacher and the students in the class."). They decide what the main idea will be and what supporting details they want to include. With or without the support of the teacher, they can use the following strategies to prepare to write:

- Talking over their ideas with peers or with the teacher
- Drawing pictures (works well for students at early stages of writing development)
- Brainstorming to create a list of things they can write about or a list of supporting details to include once the main idea has been identified
- Closing their eyes to visualize what they want to write about, concentrating on what they see, hear, smell, feel, and taste

- Using
- Creating

The teacher about, such ment, a fie

Drafting. sible. The i at this stag start writi spelling o with its pu

Revising. sentences ing detail the need and that c

At thi meet in p other, or r writing. T ple, supp prompt fo was fun? great deta

Editing. ing detail needs of i ics, and g their own groups ar

Corre what and derline th Or, the te margin s Or, the te error is a

In he correctio because i are sever when the own. She on the go writers. T those err rect corre

To d should fo that inter mechani

- Using graphic organizers, such as the word web in Figure 8.4
- Creating an outline for organizing the text

The teacher can also provide some form of shared experience for students to write about, such as a book that is read aloud, a video watched in class, a science experiment, a field trip, or an assembly.

Drafting. Students focus on getting their ideas down on paper as quickly as possible. The ideas and materials generated during prewriting are an important source at this stage. Those who are unsure where to begin should be encouraged to just start writing. Students should also be taught not to spend time worrying about spelling or grammar. This first draft is evaluated by how consistent the content is with its purpose and its appropriateness for the target audiences.

Revising. After reading over their first draft, students may want to rewrite some sentences and move things around to better organize their arguments or supporting details. They may decide to add more details to support their main idea or feel the need to remove some sentences and details that they determine are off topic and that distract from their main idea and purpose for writing.

At this stage, students often need the help of their peers and the teacher. They meet in peer-response groups to read their drafts aloud and give feedback to each other, or meet individually with the teacher to read their drafts and talk about their writing. They ask questions and receive suggestions for improvement. For example, suppose a student wrote, "I went to the mall. It was fun." The teacher could prompt for more details. "What did you do at the mall? What did you do there that was fun?" After listening to the student's responses, the teacher can say, "Those are great details! Add those to your writing."

Editing. When students have a strong draft in which the main idea and supporting details are present and well organized, one that meets its purpose and the needs of its intended audience, they focus on editing for correct spelling, mechanics, and grammar. The students first do their best to find errors and correct them on their own. If further help is needed, they can get corrections in peer-response groups and, finally, from the teacher in another teacher conference.

Correcting students' writing at this stage raises two issues: how to correct, and what and how much to correct. First, how to correct: the teacher could merely underline the errors and have the student figure out what's wrong and how to fix them. Or, the teacher could circle each error and give some type of clue by writing in the margin *sp.* for spelling errors, *ten.* for tense errors, or *pun.* for punctuation errors. Or, the teacher could make direct corrections for the student, indicating where the error is and writing in the correction.

In her research with adult ESL writers, Jean Chandler (2003) found that direct correction works best for producing accurate revisions. Students prefer this method because it is fast and easy for them, and it is fast and easy for teachers when there are several drafts. But Chandler also found that students felt they learned more when the teacher just underlined the errors and they had to correct them on their own. She concludes that both methods are viable and that the best choice depends on the goals of a particular assignment. These findings also hold for younger ELL writers. The teacher may want to use a mixture of the two, for example, underlining those errors he or she believes students are ready to self-correct and providing direct corrections for those errors students are not yet ready to deal with.

To determine what and how much to correct, the second issue, the teacher should focus on (1) errors students are ready to learn how to correct, and (2) errors that interfere with meaning. The teacher can also identify points of grammar and mechanics that students are ready to learn and provide instruction on these points

through mini-lessons. Although the teacher's goal may be to help students move their writing to the publishing stage, the text does not need to be 100% free of errors.

Publishing. Once students have edited their work by making their own corrections and corrections from their peers and the teacher, they either rewrite their final draft in clear handwriting on high quality white paper or type it, using a computer with word processing software. Students can also add illustrations and a cover.

"Publishing" means making the final draft available to others. One common technique in Writer's Workshop is to read from the Author's Chair: the student sits in the teacher's chair (or another designated chair) to read his or her writing to the class. The class and the teacher can ask the author questions, pointing out the parts they liked and, if appropriate, giving constructive feedback to help the student in future writing projects. Published writing can be added to the classroom library or sent home for students to read to their families. Many teachers set up a special wall in the classroom to publish student writing, making it easily accessible for students and classroom visitors to read. Shorter pieces of writing published by students on the same topic can be compiled into a book that can be laminated and bound, then placed in the classroom library or checked out for students to take home and read to their families.

Shorter pieces of writing published by students on the same topic, such as a field trip, can be compiled into a book that can be laminated and bound, then placed in the classroom library or checked out for students to take home and read to their families. Student writing can also be published on the school's Web site or a class wiki or blog for the entire world to see. Making published writing available to a wide audience is an essential step. This is how ELLs develop a sense of audience and gain an understanding of the need for their writing to be well organized and correct so they can convey their intended meaning to their target audience. It also makes the writing much more authentic than it would be if they simply wrote something that the teacher grades and returns.

Support for Independent Writing

Teachers provide support for students' independent writing through resources such as word walls, thematic word charts, personal word books, dictionaries, and by facilitating peer assessment and by providing mini-lessons.

Word walls. A word wall is a wall display of words arranged alphabetically under each letter in type large enough for students to read from their desks (see Figure 8.7). It should include the words students ask for or use most frequently when they are writing, including, at least initially, high frequency words. Notice, for example, that the word wall in Figure 8.7 includes "Austin," "Dallas," and "Fiesta Texas" (a local amusement park), all useful words for the students in this classroom who live in San Antonio, Texas.

The word wall should be built up throughout the year. As words are added students and the teacher discuss their meaning, and students help place the words in the proper location. If the words are affixed to the wall with Velcro or magnets, students can easily remove them and take them to their desk as needed to help with their writing. I used different colors for the word cards to make it easier for students to recognize and remember words they most frequently needed or for higher-level students to help lower-level students:

- STEPHEN: How do you spell *said*?
 VANNA: It's on the word wall, the blue card under S.
 STEPHEN: I see it. Thanks!



Figure 8.7
 Primary School
 (Photo by author)

Teachers
 students mu
 alphabetic
 according to
 ular skills a
 Many teache
 word wall ca
 around each
 Wagstaff, 19

Thematic u
 theme being
 Thematic w
 to use in th
 charts fun, s
 of the theme
 very excited
 plans.³ We n

3: Care must be
 not recognize o
 resemble a cele
 and teachers n
 vocabulary and
 about the costu
 trick-or-treatin

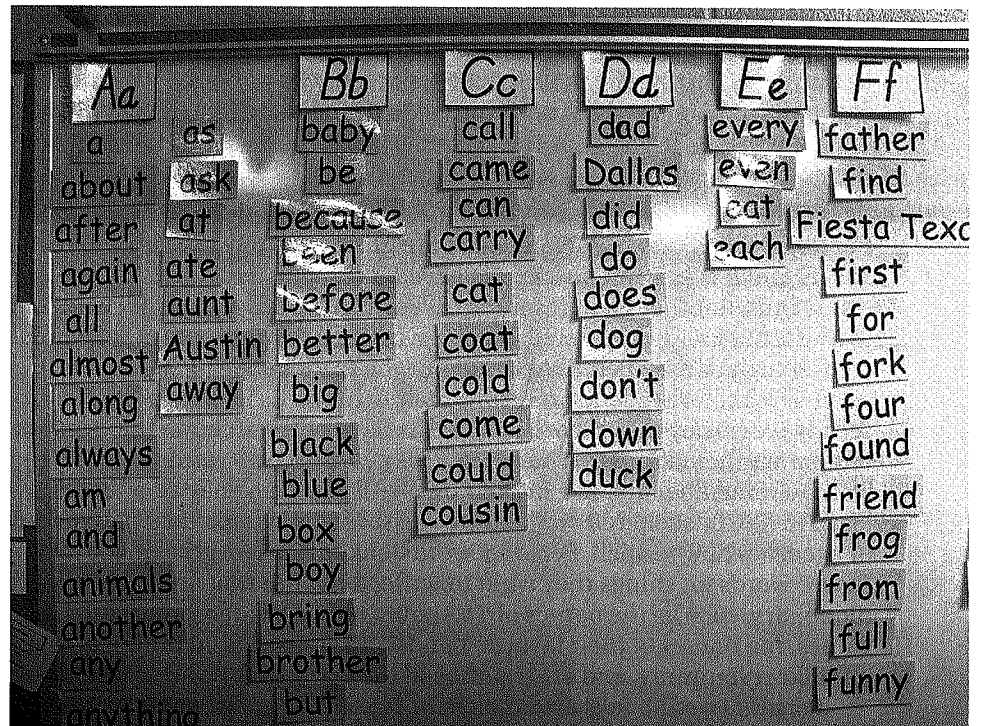


Figure 8.7 Word wall from Mrs. Armstrong's 1st grade class, Scobee Elementary School, Northside Independent School District, San Antonio, Texas, 2007.

(Photo by author.)

Teachers can also develop a range of interactive activities, such as games where students must quickly find and remove a word from the wall, group words based on alphabetic or semantic properties, and put words back in their correct locations according to alphabetical order. Such activities help students develop their vocabulary skills and ensure that they know how to use the wall to support their writing. Many teachers have found that they can provide additional support by cutting the word wall cards out in the shape of the words or making an outline in a bold color around each word following its shape. (For more suggestions, see Lynch, 2005; Wagstaff, 1999.)

Thematic word charts. A thematic word chart displays words that relate to the theme being studied in class or to a special occasion, such as an upcoming holiday. Thematic word charts, like word walls, display words that students will likely want to use in their writing and help them learn new vocabulary. To make the word charts fun, students can design the chart in the shape of something representative of the theme. For example, during the month of October, many of my students were very excited about Halloween and wanted to write in their journals about their plans.³ We made a large picture of a pumpkin out of chart paper. In a shared writing

3: Care must be taken when using holidays as a theme in your classroom. Some cultural or religious groups may not recognize or celebrate them and parents may prefer that their children not be included in any activities that resemble a celebration of the holiday. Most parents are comfortable with students' learning about the holiday, and teachers need to make sure any holiday theme activities have a clear curricular focus, such as teaching vocabulary and writing. The same words, for example, would be a resource for one student who wishes to write about the costume he will wear on Halloween and another who wishes to write in her journal, "I don't go trick-or-treating or carve jack-o-lanterns because in my religion we don't celebrate Halloween."

activity, we brainstormed Halloween-related words (*pumpkin, carve, jack-o-lantern, costume, trick-or-treating, candy, fall, autumn, monster, ghost, etc.*) and added them to the chart. During the month, when we read related books, we added new words to the chart. We also added new words when students discovered they needed them during writing. Teachers at the secondary level can create similar word walls for the academic subject they teach (e.g., math word wall, science word wall, history word wall).

Personal word books. Word walls are great, but they take up a lot of classroom space, and it is just not possible to have all the words all the students need all the time. Thus, another great resource for each student is a personal word book. Typically the books are preprinted with high frequency words and other words students commonly ask for when they write. But the word books include space under each letter section for students to record their own words as they progress through the school year. They may record words that have been added to the word wall or to a temporary thematic word chart. They may come across words in their reading they want to remember and use in their own writing. They may also record words they learn in ESL or sheltered content-area lessons, and words they have asked a friend or a teacher how to spell. Personal word books are also a great place for students to record words for things they want to write about but that are likely not even in the dictionary, such as the names of TV shows, movies, video game systems and video games, the names of their favorite bands and singers, food products, the names of popular restaurants, and other places in the community and surrounding areas.

Personal word books are efficient because they include only words that remind students of the correct spelling of words they know. The definitions are not needed. Thus, the word books can contain a large number of words that students can quickly find when needed. As with word walls, however, students will need instruction, guidance, and practice using their personal word books before they can be an effective support for their independent writing.

Dictionaries. Picture dictionaries (English monolingual and bilingual versions), which are organized by category, are useful for students at the lower and intermediate levels of English proficiency. If they want to write the word *bicycle*, for example, they can just flip to the transportation section, find the picture of the bicycle, and then look to see what it is called in English and how to spell it. The bilingual versions allow students who can read in their native language to make sure they have the word they are looking for. Regular bilingual dictionaries are also a great source for students who are literate in their L1, because they can quickly find the English equivalent of a word they want to write or confirm that a word in English is the word they were looking for. A regular English (monolingual) dictionary, appropriate to the grade-level of the student, is effective for students at higher levels of English proficiency who need to check on the precise meaning of a word or its spelling before they use it. Students can also use electronic handheld and on-line English, bilingual, and multilingual dictionaries, as well as translation tools embedded in programs such as Microsoft Word. Regardless of the type of dictionary used, for dictionaries to be effective, students will need to be taught how to use them as a resource to support their writing.

"Ask three, then me." When students need help with the spelling or definition of a word, they can observe the rule "Ask three, then me." Before approaching the teacher, a student must ask three classmates. If none of them knows how to spell the word, the student may then ask the teacher. Encouraging students to use their peers as resources supports independent writing and frees up the teacher for one-to-one conferences with students and mini-lessons for small groups of students.

Mini-lessons. Mini-lessons are short, focused lessons that can be used to teach specific skills or concepts. They are often used to introduce a new topic or to reinforce a skill. Mini-lessons can be used in a variety of ways, including as a warm-up, a main activity, or a closing activity. They can be used to teach a specific skill, such as writing a paragraph, or to introduce a new topic, such as the history of the United States. Mini-lessons can be used to teach a variety of skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They can be used to teach a variety of concepts, including grammar, vocabulary, and content area knowledge. Mini-lessons can be used to teach a variety of skills and concepts, and they can be used in a variety of ways.

Writing

Students can use writing to express their thoughts and feelings. Writing can be used to communicate information, to solve problems, and to learn. Writing can be used in a variety of ways, including as a warm-up, a main activity, or a closing activity. Writing can be used to teach a specific skill, such as writing a paragraph, or to introduce a new topic, such as the history of the United States. Writing can be used to teach a variety of skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They can be used to teach a variety of concepts, including grammar, vocabulary, and content area knowledge. Writing can be used to teach a variety of skills and concepts, and they can be used in a variety of ways.

Typical

i

K

Typical

i

Typical

t

s

K

Typical

Typical

c

c

Students can use writing to express their thoughts and feelings. Writing can be used to communicate information, to solve problems, and to learn. Writing can be used in a variety of ways, including as a warm-up, a main activity, or a closing activity. Writing can be used to teach a specific skill, such as writing a paragraph, or to introduce a new topic, such as the history of the United States. Writing can be used to teach a variety of skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. They can be used to teach a variety of concepts, including grammar, vocabulary, and content area knowledge. Writing can be used to teach a variety of skills and concepts, and they can be used in a variety of ways.

Mini-lessons. Mini-lessons are an important source of scaffolding and instructional support for ELL student writers and a critical component of Writer's Workshops. The teacher becomes aware of issues that need special attention by reading journal entries and drafts during Writer's Workshop, by conferencing with students, and by conducting formal writing assessments. For example, if a teacher noticed four students who were having trouble following capitalization rules consistently, he could pull them together for a quick lesson. The best source for these lessons would be problematic sentences from the students' own writing (with their names removed). The small group can review the rules and then correct the sentences. The teacher then encourages the students to check their own writing for these issues. After a mini-lesson, the teacher monitors the students to see whether they are making improvements, and re-teach those who still need help.

Mini-lessons should also be used proactively to teach new concepts and techniques students can incorporate into their writing. For example, for older ELLs who are ready, a mini-lesson could focus on literary devices, such as flashbacks and foreshadowing, or on advanced punctuation, such as colons, semicolons, and dashes. The mini-lesson could involve finding incidents of these in texts with which students are familiar that they can use as models for their own writing.

Writing across the Curriculum

Students should be writing to learn, and therefore they should be writing all day, in all content areas, not just during the writing portion of language arts time. To encourage students to write to learn across the curriculum, many middle and high schools draw on the Collins Writing Program, developed by the literacy expert John Collins (n.d.). The program uses frequent, usually short, writing assignments to increase students' involvement in lessons, checks on their understanding of concepts, and promotes their thinking about academic content. The program suggests the following five types of writing:

Type 1: Capture ideas. Students write one draft to get a minimum number of ideas down on paper in a set amount of time. Writing is evaluated as complete or incomplete.

Type 2: Respond correctly. Students write one draft to demonstrate understanding. Writing is evaluated for correctness of ideas.

Type 3: Edit for focus correction areas (FCAs). Students write a draft with attention to up to three targeted writing skills (e.g., topic sentence, conclusion, supporting details, content-specific vocabulary, varied sentence structure, punctuation). Writing is evaluated for content and relative to FCAs.

Type 4: Peer edit for FCAs. Like Type 3 writing but critiqued by a peer.

Type 5: Publish. Students produce a publishable piece. Writing is evaluated for content and form.

Students can have journals for math, science, social studies, or even art, music, and physical education in which they record notes, describe new concepts they learn, and keep a record of activities they have completed, all examples of Type 1 or Type 2 writing. In math, students write word problems or respond to open-ended math problems. In science, students record observations, write answers to science questions, and write experiment reports. In social studies, students write responses to questions, notes while conducting research, and research reports. In music, students can write the lyrics to songs or even musical notation. Students can incorporate text into their art or write descriptions of their artistic creations. In PE, stu-

dents can keep logs about issues related to exercise, nutrition, and health. They also write to keep track of their progress in meeting fitness goals. Each of these activities is an opportunity for students to focus on the language of the specific content area, with attention to content-area vocabulary and genres, and to develop their writing skills in English. When students write regularly for a wide range of purposes across the content areas, they become proficient writers.

Writing with Technology

Students today do much of their writing on computers and on hand-held communication devices. These technological developments are forcing teachers to rethink how writing is taught in the classroom (Richardson, 2006). On a computer, the writing process is less linear than it is on paper, because students can easily revise and edit as they write their first draft. When students write on the computer, they should be taught to take advantage of the ease of editing the computer offers along with the support of spelling and grammar checkers, dictionaries, thesauruses, and translation tools.

Students increasingly are using technology as an efficient means of written communication with others in their everyday lives. Students in the past may have occasionally written and mailed letters and postcards and perhaps written short notes in class to their friends. Students today, however, write hundreds of e-mail messages and postings on Internet social networking sites, blogs, and on-line discussion boards. They spend hours on-line in chat rooms and in instant messaging programs to "chat" live with others through text. They send dozens of text messages a week to friends from their cell phones and other hand-held devices. Instead of passing notes in class as in the good ol' days, students today may get busted for "texting" their friends in class. Teachers should not be afraid to embrace these new technologies in the classroom. They can be highly motivating because they reflect the type of writing students want to do and will do in real life.

With the increasing use of new technologies, teachers will need to find ways to address the writing in these contexts that differs from "standard" writing taught in our schools. sTuDeNts FoR eXaMpLe MaY wRiT e LiKe ThIs. Or dey myt Nd ^ ryTN a sentenC lk dis [or they might end up writing a sentence like this]. The first example shows how some young people write on-line when they want to look cool, in much the same way they might use a cool, youthful-sounding accent when they talk. The second example shows how some are creating a more efficient writing system with conventions for shorter spellings that are faster to write and send, particularly with hand-held texting devices, such as cell phones, which have fewer buttons than there are letters or buttons that are so small it is hard to press them quickly. You might see some new abbreviations in students' school writing, such as IMHO (in my humble opinion), LOL (laughing out loud), and IOW (in other words), or even emoticons, which are used in text environments the same way paralinguistic clues (e.g., facial expressions, gestures) are used in oral discourse to clarify the intended meanings of uttered words and phrases. As just a few examples, these include :-) for *happy*, :- (for *sad*, :- O for *surprised or shocked*, :- @ for *screaming*, and ; -) for *winking*. New abbreviations, emoticons, and other shortcuts are appearing all the time.

What should teachers do about this trend? First, although some consider what young people are doing to written standard English language an abomination (see, e.g., Kolesnikova, 2008), it is important to remember that languages are constantly changing. Consider, for example, the differences between Old, Middle, and Modern English or the deliberate changes Noah Webster and others made to British

English to
in a natur
better fit i
texts.

None
English. T
nonstand
that these
dard Engl
speakers
nonstand
proprie
forms to u

The H

Writing c
ences in i
allowing
Workshop
on their f
lect ideas
scribes th
The stud
both Eng
about the
dom Wri
school st
School in
explain:

We be
every
orexi
never
of sel
ers Fo

A collect
Teacher
Them (F
gogy and

Asses

Stand

Most hig
dents' w
compan

on, and health. They
als. Each of these ac-
ge of the specific con-
nres, and to develop
y for a wide range of
riters.

hand-held commu-
g teachers to rethink
On a computer, the
ents can easily revise
n the computer, they
computer offers along
ies, thesauruses, and

ent means of written
in the past may have
perhaps written short
e hundreds of e-mail
logs, and on-line dis-
in instant messaging
dozens of text mes-
held devices. Instead
ay may get busted for
o embrace these new
because they reflect

l need to find ways to
ard" writing taught in
dey myt Nd ^ ryTN a
is]. The first example
to look cool, in much
t when they talk. The
t writing system with
nd, particularly with
fewer buttons than
ss them quickly. You
g, such as IMHO (in
other words), or even
y paralinguistic clues
o clarify the intended
s, these include :-) for
g, and ; -) for *winking*.
ring all the time.

a some consider what
an abomination (see,
uages are constantly
d, Middle, and Mod-
thers made to British

English to help create standard American English. We may be seeing another phase in a natural progression of language, for language is changed by each generation to better fit into the ways they use it to communicate within their sociocultural contexts.

Nonetheless, teachers should not abandon efforts to teach students standard English. To do so would be irresponsible. Teachers do need to recognize and value nonstandard varieties of spoken and written English and help students recognize that these other forms of writing are appropriate in certain contexts but that standard English is essential for success in school and in the workplace. Native English speakers may have little difficulty "code switching" between these various forms of nonstandard and standard language, but ELL students may be less clear about appropriate boundaries and will need instruction to help them develop the correct forms to use in formal writing.

The Home-School Writing Connection

Writing can be a deeply personal form of reflection on the world and one's experiences in it. Teachers can open the way for students to engage in reflective writing by allowing them to write on topics of their own choosing in their journals, in Writer's Workshop, and in other writing projects. Students should be encouraged to draw on their funds of knowledge for their writing. They can also be encouraged to collect ideas by interviewing family members. For example, Joel E. Dworin (2006) describes the Family Stories Project he conducted with his 4th grade bilingual class. The students wrote stories using details they collected from family members in both English and Spanish. The transformative power of having students write about their own lives and experiences is highlighted in the 2006 feature film *Freedom Writers*, which tells the story of Erin Gruwell and her inner-city "at-risk" high school students, including many language-minority students, at Wilson High School in Long Beach, California. On the Freedom Writers Web site, the students explain:

We began writing anonymous journal entries about the adversities that we faced in our everyday lives. We wrote about gangs, immigration, drugs, violence, abuse, death, anorexia, dyslexia, teenage love, weight issues, divorce, suicide, and all the other issues we never had the chance to express before. We discovered that writing is a powerful form of self expression that could help us deal with our past and move forward. (Freedom Writers Foundation, n.d.)

A collection of the students' work published in *The Freedom Writers Diary: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them* (Freedom Writers, 1999), provides a vivid example of power of critical pedagogy and the funds of knowledge orientation.

Assessing Writing

Standardized High-Stakes Writing Tests

Most high-stakes standardized tests use multiple-choice questions to assess students' writing ability. Although this technique saves time and money for the testing companies who score the tests, effective teachers know that the only real way to

assess an ELL students' writing ability is to read something they have actually written. Fortunately, most states include writing prompts on their tests to which students must respond and that someone must evaluate. An important question to ask, however, is who actually reads and scores those essays on state high-stakes tests? (See Box 8.2.)

Another problem with high-stakes writing assessments is that they typically focus on a single genre (e.g., personal narrative, persuasive essay, expository text). And teachers, often under the mandates of their school and district administrators, may feel pressure to teach to the test and spend the majority of the year working on the genre required on the test. When writing instruction is narrowed to a single genre, students lose out. Rather than learning about the wide range of purposes and uses of writing, students learn that the main purpose of writing is to get a passing score on the writing test.

In real life, people rarely write five-paragraph essays or the types of writing assessed on state tests. Instead they write lists, letters, e-mail messages, text mes-

Box 8.2

Who Is Scoring Your Students' High-Stakes Writing Tests?

Most states have a writing portion of their high-stakes tests that someone must read to determine whether the student passes or fails. But who exactly is reading and scoring the students' writing?

Two journalists, David Glovin and David Evans (Glovin, 2000; Glovin & Evans, 2006), found that many states hired temporary "college-educated jobbers" to evaluate the writing. The readers were paid at rates just above minimum wage, though they could earn bonuses by working faster and scoring more exams. Many of those who were hired had questionable qualifications or even questionable degrees. Although some took the scoring of exams seriously, others were less careful and complained that the job was extremely boring. One scorer admitted: "There were times I'd be reading a paper every 10 seconds. . . . You could read them very fast. You could actually—I know this sounds very bizarre—but you could put a number on these things without actually reading the paper" (Glovin, 2000, p. 21).

Glovin and Evans documented many cases where students suffered adverse effects because of errors made by testing companies in scoring their tests and failing students who actually passed. Some of these students were forced to take remedial classes, others who were forced to repeat a grade, denied a high school diploma, or prevented from participating in graduation ceremonies. Others lost their admission to a college or university.

Glovin and Evans found that these errors are all too common because testing companies are under immense pressure to score and return tests as soon as possible. They predict that these errors and dire consequences for students are likely to continue because there is no oversight on the testing companies to hold them accountable for accurate scoring of tests.

When it comes to who scores student writing, Glovin (2000) asks, "Why not teachers?" Fortunately, some states do use their own teachers to score student writing, though teachers only score students from schools outside their own. This practice does not ensure perfect scoring, but it is certainly better to use the professionals who actually teach writing to score student writing. Scoring is also an excellent form of professional development for teachers. After reading hundreds of student writing samples, they get a clearer sense of how students are doing and what changes they might make in their writing instruction.

sages, sh
They po
ing sites
to their
blog pos
about p
These m
the lives
in the cl
to a wid
students
and pro
tive pur

Classroom

Formati
their str
student
out, the
they wr
proven
student
dent pro
student

And
ments:
teacher
single in
proficie
their str
listic as
scoring
gramm
dent dic
vantage
ing it di
skills, c
score, C
guage p

Ana
differen
1-4) for
mechan
ferent c
too hav
particu
style of
remind
teacher
assuran

sages, short notes, directions, instructions, and song or rap lyrics. They fill out forms. They post brief updates of what they are doing or thinking about on social networking sites on the Internet, such as Facebook, or via Twitter and write brief responses to their friends' posts. They post comments on-line in reaction to news articles, blog postings, videos, and their friends' photos, or they give feedback to others about products purchased or about the merchants they purchased them from. These more common uses of writing for authentic communication purposes within the lives of students in their sociocultural context typically receive little attention in the classroom. Teachers therefore need to ensure that their students are exposed to a wide variety of writing styles and genres. More important, teachers must help students see writing as a form of personal expression with many uses in real life and provide opportunities for students to write in class for authentic communicative purposes.

Classroom-Based Writing Assessment

Formative writing assessments used throughout the year enable teachers to gauge their students' progress and plan appropriate instruction and opportunities for students to improve their writing. As the quotation that opens this chapter points out, the only way for teachers to help ELLs improve their writing is to read what they write and then talk with them about their strengths and areas in need of improvement. In particular, teachers identify those areas in which they believe the student is ready to learn and make improvements. In addition, teachers assess student progress throughout the year by using portfolio assessments, and encourage students to assess their own work.

Andrew C. Cohen (1994) describes several forms of scoring student assessments: holistic, analytical, and primary trait or multi-trait. In holistic scoring, the teacher makes a judgment about the piece of writing as a whole and assigns it a single integrated score or level. Holistic scoring is typical in state English language proficiency assessments of writing, where teachers must determine the level of their students' writing. Figure 8.2 provides an example of the criteria used for holistic assessment of ELL writing in Texas. Cohen notes that the advantage of holistic scoring is that students are not assessed solely on the basis of one lesser aspect (e.g., grammatical ability) and that holistic scoring puts more emphasis on what the student did well rather than on the student's deficiencies. But there are several disadvantages. The single score (or level) does not provide diagnostic information, making it difficult to interpret the meaning of the score. Because several different subskills, of which the ELL student may have varying abilities, are lumped into one score, Cohen warns that the rating scale may confound writing ability with language proficiency.

Analytic scoring with a rubric is more common and helps teachers focus on different aspects of a student's writing. The rubrics consist of separate scales (e.g., 1–4) for each aspect, for example, *composing*, *style*, *sentence formation*, *usage*, and *mechanics* (see Figure 8.8). Cohen notes that although analytic scales keep the different categories separated and they are easy for teachers to learn how to use, they too have disadvantages. The use of specific categories may inhibit creative writing, particularly if teachers are tempted to teach students a stilted, paint-by-number style of writing that focuses on checking off the various categories. Writing, Cohen reminds us, is much more than the sum of its parts. Also, these scales require teachers to make qualitative judgments, which are difficult to make, and there is no assurance that teachers will use the scales according to the given criteria.

Domain Score*	Composing	Style	Sentence formation	Usage	Mechanics
4	Central idea with relevant details in a well organized text	Well chosen vocabulary; excellent sentence variety; tone that appeals to readers	Standard word order; no run-on sentences; no sentence fragments; effective transitions	Correct use of inflection (e.g., verb conjugations, plurals, prefixes, suffixes, adverbs, etc.); consistent tense; consistent subject-verb agreement; standard word meaning	Correct use of mechanics (capitalization, punctuation, spelling), and formatting
3	Central idea but with fewer details and some digressions	Acceptable vocabulary choices; some sentence variety; consistent but less appealing tone	Mostly standard word order; some run-on sentences; some sentence fragments; occasional omission of words; errors do not detract from meaning	Mostly correct use of inflections; mostly consistent tense and subject-verb agreement; mostly standard word meaning; errors do not detract from meaning	Mostly correct use of mechanics and formatting; errors do not detract from meaning
2	Lack of a focused central idea, or more than one idea; limited details and many digressions	Basic vocabulary; limited to no sentence variety; inconsistent tone	Some nonstandard word order; several run-on sentences; several sentence fragments; omissions of several words; errors somewhat detract from meaning	Some correct use of inflections; some consistency in tense and subject-verb agreement; several errors in word meaning; errors somewhat detract from meaning	Some correct use of mechanics and formatting; errors somewhat detract from meaning
1	Lack of a central idea; no details, random digressions	Limited vocabulary; choppy sentences; flat tone	Frequent nonstandard word order; mostly run-on sentences or sentence fragments; omissions of many words; errors frequently detract from meaning	Little to no correct use of inflections; frequent tense shifts; little to no subject-verb agreement; many errors in word meaning; errors fully detract from meaning	Little to no correct use of mechanics or formatting; errors fully detract from meaning.

*4 = consistent control; 3 = nearly consistent control; 2 = inconsistent control; 1 = little or no control

Figure 8.8 Analytic scoring rubric for writing. (Adapted from OMalley & Pierce, 1996.)

Primary trait and multi-trait scoring are commonly used for assessing writing on a specific topic. In primary trait scoring, the focus is on a single trait, such as the main idea. In multi-trait scoring, several traits can be considered, such as, for an opinion essay, clear opinion (main idea), adequate details to support the opinion, and a strong conclusion. The advantage of primary trait and multi-trait scoring is that they allow the rater to give detailed attention to just one or a few issues at a time. One disadvantage, however, is it is difficult for raters to focus on a single trait (or set of traits). Also, if the assessment does not consider other factors or traits, it may be too narrow.

The 6+1 Trait Writing model, developed by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, is an assessment and instructional framework that combines analytic and multi-trait scoring. It is used in schools throughout the country and teachers of ELLs have found it useful in assessing student writing and identifying the aspects of certain traits on which to focus their instruction to help students improve their writing. (6 + 1 Writing Trait, related links)

For an example of how a teacher might use an analytical scoring rubric to assess a student's writing, let's look at how Mr. Moreno, a teacher in San Antonio, Texas, evaluated a personal narrative essay by Maria, one of his 5th grade Spanish-speaking ELL students. Maria's writing sample, describing what she did over the spring break, is shown in Figure 8.9. Before looking at Mr. Moreno's scores in the text that follows, read the essay in Figure 8.9 and decide what scores, according to the analytic scoring rubric in Figure 8.8, you would give Maria in each of the five areas. Also identify Maria's strengths, the areas in which she is in need of improvement, and instructional strategies that could be used to help her improve her writing.

Spring Break

I wish this day never fines. On Sunday 12 I went to a cinsiañera on tuesday 16 I went to walk about 9 miles from san patrisio to San Fernanda. on Sunday 19 I went to church and I went to a mexican resturant.

On Sunday 12 I went to a cinsiañera. The party was on San lorenzo it began at 10.00 the Fud was so good I curent stop eatan they were aibin Sopa de aros, carde gisada and carne asadal I eat som chocalet cake buit candy on top.

On tuesday I went to walk for my dad. I now you are wondering way. my dad was learnig about jesos. wen I was walking my cosend was en front of my so I acsededly step on hes sou so he fel and then tasde kiun my wo is that meal

On Sunday I went to church the preace is my pren so he awis tas my hu.

The chure that I go to is cald San lorenzo I went to See the birgen de guadalupe. Then I went to eat in las palapas.

wen you go to Spring Break you cald do stuf bery Fun Talk my gent to church, I went for a walk, I went to a cinsiañera. ¿So wat did you do on Spring Break?

Figure 8.8 Analytic scoring rubric for writing. (Adapted from O'Malley & Pierce, 1996.)

*4 = consistent control; 3 = nearly consistent control; 2 = inconsistent control; 1 = little or no control

Mr. Moreno gave Maria the following scores:

Composing	4
Style	3
Sentence formation	3
Usage	2
Mechanics	2

While reflecting on Maria's strengths, the areas in which she is in need of improvement, and instructional strategies that could be used to help her improve her writing, he wrote the following comments:

Maria is able to express her thoughts. She understands sentence structure. She knows that letters should be capitalized at the beginning of the sentence and that they should end with correct punctuation. She understands the concept of the different parts of the essay which includes the introduction, the body with 3 details, and the conclusion.

Maria needs improvement with her spelling. She applies her prior knowledge of phonics in Spanish as she sounds out words in English, for example *wer* for *were* or *preace* for *priest*. For some words, she is not able to hear all the sounds of the letters and makes up the letters that she thinks go in it, for example *awis* for *always*. Maria learned that for an expository essay you should list the different topics you will write about, but brought that over into a narrative essay, where the author really needs to engage the reader using a story-like style.

Maria would probably best be helped by enlisting the use of a personal word book where she could write the correct spelling for words that she likes to use all the time. In addition, I need to review with Maria the writing strategies for the different types of essays (narrative, expository, persuasive).

How did your scores compare with Mr. Moreno's? Do you agree with his assessment of Maria's strengths, needs, and strategies to help her improve? What more would you add? Might Maria, for example, benefit from some mini-lessons on capitalization and punctuation? It is clear from this sample that she has some knowledge of the rules. With a little more instruction, she can learn about the need to capitalize words at the beginning of sentences and proper nouns (e.g., Mexican, Tuesday, San Lorenzo) and to be more consistent in her use of ending punctuation.

Portfolio Assessment

An assessment of a single piece of student writing will not give a valid and reliable assessment of a student's writing ability. Students' writing development is not linear, and there may appear to be regressions as students take risks and try new genres. Thus, multiple measures are needed, in particular, portfolio assessment, based on writing samples collected throughout the year. The portfolio can include journal entries, early drafts and published writing from Writer's Workshop, samples from directed writing lessons, and samples of students' writing in different genres and content areas. It should include samples of unedited writing from throughout the year, and samples that highlight the students' strengths and areas in need of improvement. Some teachers determine what to include in the portfolio, while others work collaboratively with the students to determine which pieces to include.

Each entry should be dated and each should have been assessed separately. The teacher can then undertake formative assessments by reviewing student portfolios often throughout the year and summative assessments by reviewing them at the end of the school year.

Peer Assessment and Self-Assessment

Students should be involved in assessing their own writing and that of their peers. They can use the same rubrics the teacher uses, or a more "student-friendly" ver-

Conventions

- ☐ My paragraphs
- ☐ Each of my paragraphs has a main idea
- ☐ I have used transitions
- ☐ I have used transitions
- ☐ Periods are used to end sentences.
- ☐ I have quoted dialogue.
- ☐ My spelling
- ☐ My handwriting

Fluency

- ☐ My sentences are complete
- ☐ My sentences are complete before.
- ☐ My sentences are complete
- ☐ The meaning is clear.
- ☐ My sentences are complete grammar.
- ☐ There are no errors
- ☐ My sentences are complete

Organization

- ☐ My report is organized
- ☐ My introduction is inviting.
- ☐ My ideas flow
- ☐ I have a satisfactory

Figure 8.10 Self-Assessment

sion. Sim
another
cially du
was deve
however,

SUMMARY

Writing i
cation in
writing i

Writing Checklist

Conventions

- ☐ My paragraphs are sound.
- ☐ Each of my paragraphs has one main idea.
- ☐ I have used correct grammar.
- ☐ I have used correct punctuation.
- ☐ Periods are at the end of my sentences.
- ☐ I have quotation marks around dialogue.
- ☐ My spelling is correct.
- ☐ My handwriting is legible.

Fluency

- ☐ My sentences begin in different ways.
- ☐ My sentences build upon the ones before.
- ☐ My sentences are different lengths.
- ☐ The meaning of each of my sentences is clear.
- ☐ My sentences flow and use correct grammar.
- ☐ There are no run-ons.
- ☐ My sentences are complete.

Organization

- ☐ My report is sequenced in order.
- ☐ My introduction is exciting and inviting.
- ☐ My ideas flow and are well connected.
- ☐ I have a satisfying conclusion.

Capitalization

- ☐ I have capitalized the first word in each sentence.
- ☐ I have capitalized people and pet names.
- ☐ I have capitalized months and days.
- ☐ I have capitalized cities, states, and places.
- ☐ I have capitalized titles of books, movies, et cetera.

Word Choice

- ☐ Every word seems just right.
- ☐ I used a lot of describing words.
- ☐ My words paint pictures in the reader's mind.
- ☐ I used strong verbs like darted and exclaimed.
- ☐ I used synonyms to add variety.

Ideas

- ☐ I used a graphic organizer to create and organize ideas.
- ☐ My ideas are written in my own words.
- ☐ My report is clear and focused.
- ☐ I understand my topic.
- ☐ My details give the reader important information.
- ☐ My ideas relate to one another.
- ☐ I have listened to suggestions from the teacher or peers.

Figure 8.10 Self-assessment writing checklist. (Source: Manning, 2001.)

sion. Simpler versions are especially appropriate for younger students. Checklists are another form of assessment students can use to evaluate their own writing, especially during the editing stage of Writer's Workshop. The checklist in Figure 8.10 was developed by a teacher in Chicago. For rubrics and checklists to be effective, however, students must receive instruction, modeling, and practice in using them.

SUMMARY

Writing is a crucial skill for academic success in school and for effective communication in the sociocultural contexts in which students live. With new technologies, writing is becoming one of the primary means through which individuals in our

society interact and communicate with each other. Research has revealed a strong connection between oral language proficiency, reading proficiency, and writing ability. Thus, teachers can help students become better writers by helping them become better listeners, speakers, and readers, and by helping them use books and other texts as models for their own writing.


The field of second language writing is relatively new, and though we lack a comprehensive model of second language writing, research has led to important findings. Writing development appears to be similar for English fluent and ELL students, and most students will move through predictable stages, though this development may not be totally linear. ELL student writing, however, differs in two important ways: (1) students with literacy skills in their native language can transfer many of these skills to English writing, and (2) ELL students' ability to express themselves in written English is highly dependent on their level of oral English proficiency. Thus, teachers should build on the strength of students' writing skills in their L1 (or develop them first in the L1, as in bilingual programs), providing extensive oral language development through ESL and sheltered content-area instruction. Writing should not be delayed until students reach a certain level of English proficiency, because students can also learn new vocabulary and further develop their oral skills through writing.


The writing *to*, *with*, and *by* model is a way of framing effective writing instruction through modeling, scaffolding, and ample practice for students to write meaningful text for authentic purposes. Writing *to* ELLs includes modeled writing; writing *with* ELLs includes interactive, shared, and guided writing. Writing *by* ELLs includes journal writing and Writer's Workshop. Process writing, through the Writer's Workshop model, provides scaffolding to help ELL students move through the various stages of the writing process, from the prewriting stage, during which they plan what they will write, through the publishing stage, during which they produce a polished draft and share it with real audiences, beginning with their teacher and classmates.

Teachers can support students' writing development during Writer's Workshop with regular teacher conferences and mini-lessons, and they can support independent writing through the use of word walls, thematic word charts, personal word books, and dictionaries, including bilingual ones.



Effective formative assessment of ELL student writing enables teachers to monitor their students' writing development and plan appropriate instruction and opportunities for guided practice accordingly. They can use analytic or multi-trait scoring rubrics to focus attention on various aspects of writing and pinpoint strengths and areas in need of improvement. Students can use these rubrics, in addition to checklists, to assess their own writing or that of their peers. Portfolios are an important tool for assessing students' growth as writers throughout the school year.

Discussion Questions

-  1. **On-line Discussion Board** If you have learned, or failed to learn, another language, what challenges did you face in learning to write in the new language? What role did your native language play in the development of your writing ability in that language?
2. Why is English oral language development such an important factor in ELL students' writing development in English?
3. What is the relationship between reading and writing ability? How can reading be used to help ELLs improve their writing?


4. Why are journal writing and writing becoming more important in the 21st century?
5. In a growingly high-tech world, how can this type of writing be used to improve student learning?
-  6. **On-line Writing** How can technology be used to improve student learning?

Research



-  1. **Wiki-Style Writing** How can the use of wiki-style writing be used to improve student learning? What are the criteria for student writing? What are the traits of good writing? How can the use of wiki-style writing be used to improve student learning?
-  2. **Wiki-Style Writing** How can the use of wiki-style writing be used to improve student learning? What are the criteria for student writing? What are the traits of good writing? How can the use of wiki-style writing be used to improve student learning?
3. **Interview** How can the use of interviews be used to improve student learning? What are the criteria for student writing? What are the traits of good writing? How can the use of interviews be used to improve student learning?

Recon

Ferris, D.
practi
An ov

4. Why are modeled writing, interactive writing, shared writing, guided writing, journal writing, and Writer's Workshop so important for ELLs? How does the writing *to*, *with*, and *by* framework provide scaffolding for ELLs to help them become proficient writers of English?
5. In a growing number of schools, much of the writing instruction focuses on narrowly training students to produce the type of writing required by their state's high-stakes test (e.g., personal narrative). What are some of the problems with this type of instruction? What can and what should teachers do about it?
-  6. **On-line Discussion Board** Students may use a wide variety of nonstandardized writing on the Internet and when texting on handheld communication devices. Is this form of writing of concern to you? What should teachers do when features of this nonstandard writing begin to show up in school writing assignments?

Research Activities

-  1. **Wiki-This** Conduct a case study on the writing development of an ELL student. Collect several samples of the student's writing throughout the semester, including samples of different genres and from different stages of the writing process. Assess the writing using one or more of the following: (1) the rubric or criteria your state uses for its English language proficiency assessment of ELL student writing, (2) the rubrics provided in this chapter, (3) the 6+1 Writing Trait Scoring Guide (www.nwrel.org/assessment/pdf/Rubrics/6plus1traits.pdf). Using what you have learned in this chapter, discuss what you see as the growth and strengths in the student's writing and the areas in need of improvement. Determine instructional strategies to help the student improve his or her writing. In addition, compare your state's assessment rubric or criteria with the other rubrics you used. How appropriate or accurate do you feel the state version is? How did the results of the state version compare with the results of others? Which did you prefer, and why?
-  2. **Wiki-This** Observe an ELL classroom, paying particular attention to the teacher's writing instruction. Describe the instructional techniques and strategies, and the skills he or she emphasizes. How many opportunities do students have to engage in independent writing? What scaffolding or other supports are available for students when writing? How much writing are students doing outside of their regular writing instruction? How effective do you feel the writing instruction for ELL is in this classroom? What strengths did you observe that you would like to include in your own classroom? What improvements could be made to the teacher's writing instruction?
3. Interview teachers about their writing instruction. What are their views about teaching writing to ELLs? What do they see as the role of writing in second language acquisition? How do they see the connections between reading and writing instruction? Do they view writing as an isolated academic subject, or do they view writing as an important communicative tool in sociocultural contexts? How do they balance providing effective writing instruction and helping students prepare for state high-stakes writing tests?

Recommended Reading

Ferris, D. R., & Hedgcock, J. (2004). *Teaching ESL composition: Purpose, process, practice*. Oxford: Routledge.

An overview of the theories and practices of the field of second language writ-

ing, with practical suggestions for effective writing instruction. Particularly appropriate for teachers of older ELL students.

Kendall, J., & Khuon, O. (2006). *Writing sense: Integrated reading and writing lessons for English language learners*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

A companion to *Making Sense*, also by veteran teachers Juli Kendall and Outey Khuon. Each chapter, as in the earlier book, focuses on one of the five stages of English proficiency, with examples for both younger and older ELL students.

Kroll, B. (Ed.). (1990). *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom*. New York: Cambridge.

An in-depth and critical review of the research in the field of second language writing that includes discussion of the implications for classroom teachers.

Samway, K. D. (2006). *When English language learners write: Connecting research to practice, K-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

This teacher-friendly book focused on the elementary and middle school grades provides a review of research on the writing development of ELLs and shows teachers how to put this research into effective practice.

Conte for EL

Classrooms are, f
Language lies at t

KEY TERMS

- differentiated in
- sample perform
indicators
- thematic teachin

ELL stu
English
academic
not set u
demic co
content v
signed.

The s
gual prog
guage. B
academic
the nativ
to talk ab
tent area
increase
instructi
instructi

In th
tered ins
discuss t
An over
language
these co
of provis