

Writing



Words are the primary means of communication for human beings. Using them is the way we tell one another what we want and what we don't want, what we think and how we feel. When words are spoken they are a wonderful asset quick, direct and easy. But when words must be written they become burdensome, part of a slow and laborious task.

Writing is the most sophisticated and complex achievement of the language system. In the sequence of language development, it is typically the last to be learned, although the early literacy approach encourages children to write even before they learn to read. Through writing, we integrate previous learning's and experiences in listening, speaking and reading. Proficiency in written language requires an adequate basis of oral language skills as well as many other competencies. The writer must be able to keep one idea in mind while formulating it into words and sentences and must be skilled in planning the correct graphic form for each letter and word while manipulating the writing instrument. The writer must also have sufficient visual and motor memory to integrate complex eye-hand relationships.

There are 3 components of writing:

- Written expression
- Spelling
- Handwriting (grapho motor)

Written Expression

Competent writing requires many related abilities including facility in spoken language, the ability to read, skills in spelling, legible handwriting or skill with computer keyboarding, knowledge of the rules of written usage, and cognitive strategies for organizing and planning the writing.

Early Literacy and Writing

The term early literacy refers to the child's early entrance into the world of words, language and stories. The concept of early literacy emphasizes the interrelatedness of the various forms of language in the child's development. Children develop literacy through simultaneous experiences with oral language, reading and writing.

The early literacy philosophy suggests that writing may be earlier than reading and may actually develop earlier than reading. Writing is a more self involving than reading because the meaning of a writer's message originates from within the writer and is known to the writer in advance. In contrast, reading requires that reader be able to interpret someone else's ideas and use of language which is a more difficult task for the beginner.

The writing process

There has been a major shift in instructional emphasis to the process instead of the product of writing. Writing is a learned skill that can be taught in school setting as thinking – learning activity, with emphasis on the writing process. As a cognitive process, writing requires both backward and forward thinking. Good writers do not simply sit down and produce a text. Rather, they go through several stages of the writing process – pre writing, writing a draft, revising and sharing with an audience (Graves 1983, 1994)

Stage 1: Prewriting: During this first stage, the writer gathers ideas and refines them before beginning formal writing. Prewriting involves a type of brainstorming, such as talking through some thoughts and ideas, jotting a few noted in a margin or developing a graphic organiser or list of the main points. During this time, the writer also identifies an intended audience. Students are more willing to write if they choose the topic. They may write about someone they know, a special event or themselves. Teachers can help by asking students to make a list of people who are special to them or to list things they did during a holiday break.

Stage 2: Writing a draft: In the second stage of the writing process, the writer records the ideas on paper. The term drafting could be used (at this stage) instead of writing to emphasize that this is one version of what eventually will be written and that it will be changed. The first draft of a piece of writing is not for the reader but for the writer. As the writer jots down words, sentences and paragraphs, these give rise to new ideas or ways to revise already written. At this stage, there may be an overflow of ideas, with little organization or consideration of prose, grammar and spelling.

Stage 3: Revising: Having completed the prewriting and drafting stages, the writer then refines the drafted version of the text by revising. There may be several revisions, with different kinds of changes made in each, such as in content, the way of expressing the ideas, the vocabulary, the sentence structure and the sequence of ideas. The last revision is editing, which includes checking for grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors. This stage requires a very critical view of one's own work.

Stage 4: Sharing with an audience: This fourth stage is important because it gives value and worth to the entire writing process. It provides students with the opportunities to receive feedback and to perceive themselves as authors responding to an audience. In this final stage, the writer considers the audience for whom the material is intended and whether the idea will be well communicated to the intended reader. Forms of sharing could be a presentation, a bulletin board display or even a puppet show.

Strategies for writing

A variety of writing strategies can help students find ideas for writing, share their ideas on paper, use interesting and description vocabulary and make the writing purposeful.

- **Writing conversations:** 2 students sit and communicate via writing only. They cannot speak. This strategy helps students learn to record their thoughts in writing.
- **Personal Journals:** Students record personal events or experiences in writing.
- **Patterned Writing:** The students use a favorite predictable book with a patterned writing and then they write their own version. This method gives students the security of a frame to use to write a personalized response.
- **Graphic Organizes:** Are visual display that organize and structure ideas and concepts. Graphic organizers help students understand the reading material, and research show that the reading comprehension improves when students use Graphic organizers. E.g.:-Venn diagram for comparing and contrasting assignment.
- **Drawing Pictures:** This is an important communication method and should be encouraged.
- Computer and Word Processing.