

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO WRITING DIFFICULTIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Are you concerned about a student in your class who is experiencing writing difficulties? This can be due to several oral language and literacy underpinnings that are preventing your student from shining in his writing abilities.

- 1) Sound/Syllable/Word level difficulties: Students with difficulties writing at the word level may have an impairment in *phonological* and *morphological* structures of

words. "Phonological awareness" describes the ability to identify and manipulate the sounds that make up words (e.g., first sound, last sound, & rhyming). "Morphological awareness" describes the ability to identify constituents of words (e.g., prefixes, suffixes, roots, and grammatical inflections). Children with word level difficulties may also have challenges with sight words, and spelling.



- 2) Sentence/Discourse level difficulties: Students with difficulties with longer writing tasks and combining ideas may have an impairment in recognizing discourse components (e.g., structure of a narrative, beginning/middle/end), difficulties using sentences in cohesive and related sequences, and impaired reading comprehension.

Curriculum Connections

By the end of Grades 1-3, students should be able to organize written ideas for an intended audience, and draft, revise, & edit (sentence/discourse level focus). Editing at the word level, and identifying "words within words", requires a morphological and phonological awareness that an SLP can help with.

Tips for the Classroom

- ✚ Review relevant vocabulary and their written forms with your class, and use this vocabulary throughout different contexts and lessons for maximum exposure.
- ✚ Organize mnemonics such as POWER (plan, organize, write, edit, rewrite, revise) to help students reflect on their writing process.
- ✚ Create prompt cards to remind students of key words or phrases for the writing task (e.g., "In my opinion...." Or "because...").

Education & DLD

Jessica Pereira and Monica Valenta (M.Cl.Sc. SLP Candidates)

References

Englert, C. S. (1992). Writing instruction from a sociocultural perspective. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 25*(3), 153–172. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002221949202500303>

Spoken Language Disorders: Overview. (n.d.). Retrieved December 20, 2017, from <http://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Spoken-Language-Disorders/>

The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8, Language (2006). Retrieved from: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/elementary/language18currb.pdf>

Education & DLD

Jessica Pereira and Monica Valenta (M.Cl.Sc. SLP Candidates)