

Learning Activities that Foster Writing Development

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Principles of Teaching Writing

- Writing instruction should be relevant to children's lives
- Teachers should model the writing process
 - *Think Aloud* can be effective: Say out loud what children should be thinking as they are writing
- Children need considerable practice writing
- Children need feedback on their writing

Writers Workshop

- **Writers Workshop:** Children engage in authentic writing activities
 - Lasts for 30 to 60 minutes
- **Part #1:** Teacher gives a mini-lesson on an important writing skill (handwriting, spelling, punctuation, etc.)
- **Part #2:** Children have time to:
 - Write a draft
 - Peer review to edit writing
 - Write a final copy (Publish)
- **Part #3:** A few children share what they have written

Mini Lesson

- **Mini-Lesson:** Shorter and more pointed than a typical lesson
 - Can last from 5 to 10 minutes
- **Components of a Mini-Lesson**
 - **Connection:** Connect the skill to students' interests or previous learning
 - **Teaching:** Instruction on one skill
 - **Practice:** Simple practice in the skill
 - **Conclusion:** Summarize the skill

MSP Model for Teaching Writing

- Model writing (*I do*)
 - Think Aloud: Verbally describe what you are doing/thinking
- Shared writing (*We do*)
 - Teacher typically writes but children share in the writing by question-and-answer
- Practice writing (*You do*)
 - Children write independently

Handwriting

- Handwriting is developed by practice writing
 - Find time throughout the day for children to practice writing as much as possible
- Early emergent writers: Draw pictures
 - Obtain used paper from a Photostat
- Emergent writers: Write their name as frequently as possible
 - Allow children to write at their own level and provide feedback to help them continue improving
- Give handwriting demonstrations:
 - How to hold a pencil
 - How to form each letter

MSP Model for Handwriting

- **Model:** Teacher model how to shape letters
- **Shared:** Pupils trace letters
- **Practice:** Pupils write letters independently
 - Children should get feedback

Spelling

- Note: Phonemic awareness and phonics lessons provide a foundation for spelling
- Provide feedback for invented spelling at a child's developmental level
- Teach strategies for spelling an unknown word
 - Sound out the word: Identify the sounds and link each sound to a letter(s)
 - Make connections on how to spell a similarly sounding word
 - Look in the dictionary
- Lessons in spelling high frequency words
 - Word wall
 - Write on the board
 - Using magnetic letters or flash cards
 - Use their body

MSP Model for Spelling

- **Model:** Teacher models how to spell a word by think aloud
- **Shared:** Teacher asks pupils to identify the sounds and letters in a word (e.g., sound out the word)
- **Practice:** Children practice spelling words independently

Composition

- Early emergent writers
 - Draw pictures to tell a story
 - Teacher or class assistant can write what children dictate below the picture
 - Dictate text while a teacher, class assistant, and/or older pupil records what is said
- Emergent writers
 - Combination of pictures and writing
- Transitional writers
 - Write a text

MSP Model for Composition

- Writing Morning Messages is one way to teach composition
 - **Model:** Think-aloud as you are writing the Morning Message
 - **Shared:** Ask children questions to help you compose the message
 - **Practice:** Have children write parts of the message

Morning Message

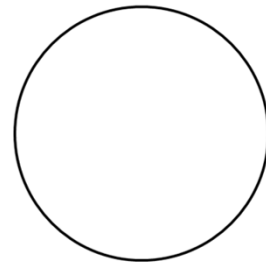
Good morning class! How was your weekend? We will plant seeds in science class today. I look forward to watching our seeds grow!

Writing Learning Centre

- **Writing Learning Centre:** Practice writing skills from scribbling to writing authentic texts (e.g., letter, informational piece, or story)
- Introduce the Writing Learning Centre
 - Introduce the different materials
 - Model a writing activity
- Periodically update the writing prompts in the Writing Centre and inform children of what they are
 - **Writing Prompt:** Word or short phrase that helps children think of what to write

Sample Writing Prompts

- I am special because...
- I would like to learn...
- During outdoor play, I like to...
- I would like to travel to...
- If I were a teacher, I would...
- A person I admire is _____ because...
- My happiest memory is...
- When I grow up, I want to be a...



A circle is just a circle until you add...

Writing Learning Centre Materials

- **Paper****
- **Pencils****
- Markers, paint, colored pencils, crayons
- Small dry erase board and markers
- Dictionary
- Writing Prompts (alternate every few weeks)
- Cards for writing letters
- Alphabetic letters (e.g., flash cards, magnetic letters, foam letters)
- Board for posting children's writing
- Word wall