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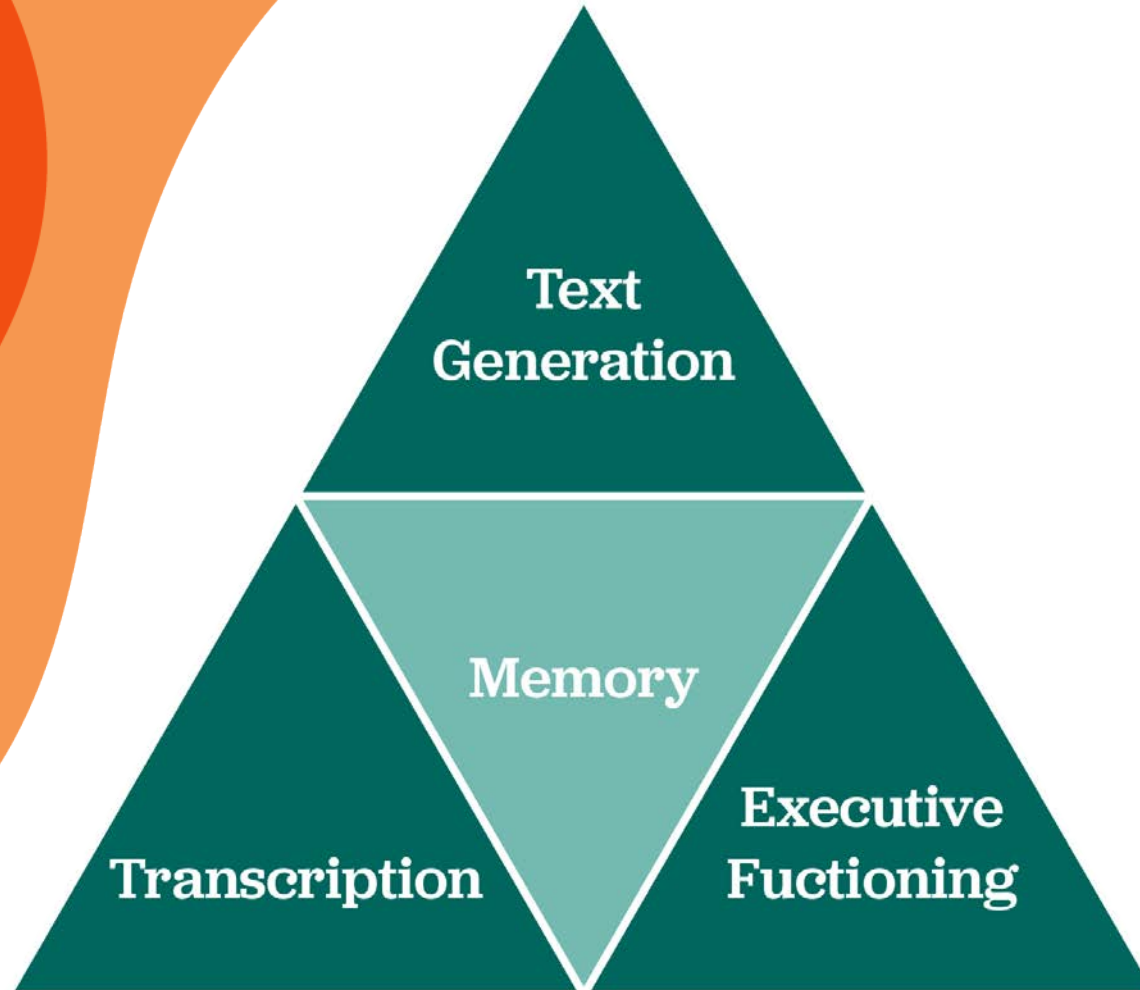
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TRANSCRIPTION SKILLS!

Why They Matter and What To Do About Them

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Simple View of Writing

Simple View of Writing (Berninger & Amtmann, 2003)

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Transcription is the process of transferring words from the mind to the page.

This process includes handwriting, word processing, and spelling, all three of which are required of written production but not speech.

Working Memory

Steve Graham

Charles A. MacArthur

Working memory is the "capacity to hold varying amounts of information in memory while processing it."

(MacArthur & Graham in MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2016, 29)

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Working Memory

"Writing is the act of dealing with an excessive number of simultaneous demands or constraints. Viewed this way, a writer in the act is a thinker on full-time cognitive overload."

(Flower and Hayes, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," 33)

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What if your brain were a stove?

Back burners
Things you do automatically, without actively thinking about them.

Front burners
Things you must concentrate actively to do. (working memory)

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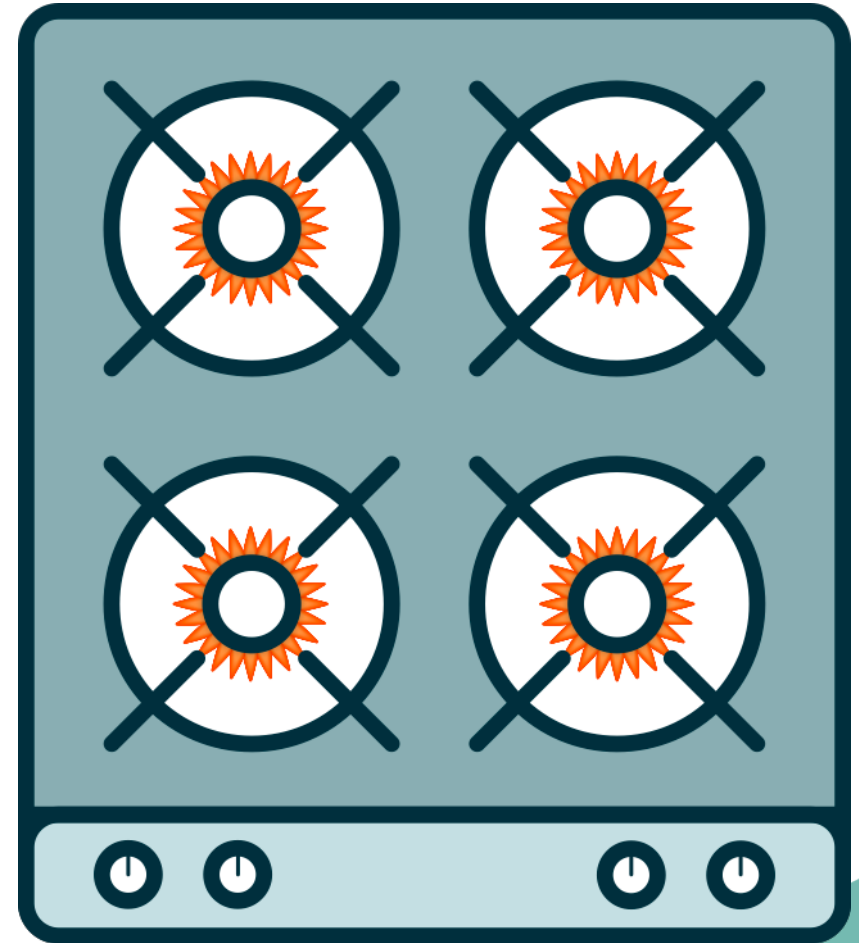
Importance of Automaticity

Automaticity occurs without voluntary control and interferes minimally with other processes.

"Typical writers compose in bursts of writing activity broken by long production pauses.

In typically developing children bursts can be constrained by transcription bottlenecks in processing such as slow handwriting or spelling."

(Alves, Branco, Castro, and Olive as cited in Connelly and Dockrell in MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2016, 356)

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"..[A]utomaticity of letter writing is the single best predictor of length and quality of written composition in the primary years."

(Graham, Berninger, Abbott, Abbott, & Whitaker as cited by Fayol in MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2016, 136)

Steve Graham

Virginia Berninger

Handwriting Impacts Text Production

Steve Graham

Nancy Mather

o Difficulty with handwriting in students 3rd grade and below (both regular ed and LD) may impede text generation. (Graham, 2009-10)

o "[R]apid, legible, and comfortable handwriting facilitates writing production." (Mather et al, 2009)

o Automatized handwriting significantly improves both the quantity and quality of writing. (Berninger, 2012; Graham, 2009-10)

Handwriting Impacts Spelling & Composing

Beverly Wolf

Virginia Berninger

2nd grade students (both those continuing with manuscript instruction and those learning cursive) with "handwriting instruction embedded in other literacy activities" showed advancement in language skills, including alphabet writing, spelling, and composing.
(Wolf, Berninger, & Abbott, 2016)

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Handwriting Impacts Reading & Spelling

Virginia Berninger

o "Learning to form letters by hand improves perception of letters and contributes to better reading and spelling." (Berninger, 2012)

o "Writing is essential for developing the networks involved in letter processing." (James, Jao, & Berninger in MacArthur, Graham, and Fitzgerald, 2016)

o "[L]earning to write and perceive letters during early childhood may affect learning to spell and read words during middle childhood." (James, Jao, & Berninger in MacArthur, Graham, and Fitzgerald, 2016)

Handwriting Instruction
Lasting Effects

Steve Graham

o "In grades 4 to 6, handwriting fluency still accounts for 42% of the variability in the quality of children's writing…" (Graham, 2009-10)

o "[S]tudents' handwriting speed continues to increase at least until Grade 9." (Graham, 2009-10)

o In three separate studies, researchers found that college students who took notes by hand performed better on assessments than did their peers who typed their notes. (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014)

A few important takeaways….

- ☑ Handwriting instruction is important for ALL students, not just those who struggle. (Berninger, Wolf, & Abbott, 2016)
- ☑ Instruction should be daily, direct, and explicit.
- ☑ Instruction is best when it is embedded in other literacy activities. (Berninger, Wolf, & Abbott, 2016)
- ☑ Attention to posture, paper position, and pencil grip facilitates legible and comfortable handwriting.
- ☑ Students need at least two years with a stroke (manuscript or cursive) to achieve automaticity.
- ☑ Students who struggle may benefit from beginning cursive earlier.
- ☑ Teachers need adequate professional development to instruct students in handwriting.

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Learning Word Processing Skills Is Important

wow!

According to *Writing Next*

o Moderate impact for students in general.   effect size – .51

o Significant impact for low-achieving writers.   effect size – .7

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Word Processing Benefits

Production & Modification

o Produces neat, legible writing.

o Adapted to writing theories as a cognitive process involving recursive cycles of planning, drafting, and revising.

o Includes spelling and grammar checkers as well as a quickly expanding array of interactive editing tools.

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Word Processing Benefits

In the 21st Century

o Widely used in general population.

o Increasingly used for writing assessments as early as Grade 3.

o Supports social processes through opportunities for publication and collaborative writing.

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A few important takeaways….

- ☑ In this technology-based world, word processing instruction is essential.
- ☑ Instruction should be daily, direct, and explicit, beginning as early as Grade 3.
  - Students who struggle may benefit from beginning word processing earlier than other students.
- ☑ Instruction should coincide with students' need to produce text on the computer for school assignments.
- ☑ Teachers need adequate training to instruct students in word processing.

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Handwriting vs. Word Processing

"The goal of writing instruction in the Information Age should be developing hybrid writers who are adept with multiple writing tools including pens and keyboards."

(James, Jao, & Berninger in MacArthur, Graham, and Fitzgerald, 2016, 125)

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Spelling Impacts Writing Fluency

Steve Graham

Karen Harris

o "Spelling performance explains part of the variance in composition performance."
  (Juel 1988 as cited in Foyol in MacArthur, Graham, and Fitzgerald, 2016, 136)

o Poor spellers may "overwrite" existing phonologically-stored information in order to sound out or spell a word of which they are uncertain.
  (Torrance and Galbraith in MacArthur, Graham, and Fitzgerald, 2006, 72)

o "[I]nterventions focused on spelling improved children's writing fluency."
  (Graham, Harris, & Chorzempa 2002 as cited in Foyol in MacArthur, Graham, and Fitzgerald, 2016, 136)

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Spelling Impacts Writing

Poor Spelling…

o Interferes with composing.

o Can constrain a child's development as a writer.

o Can cause a student to choose words of inferior quality to avoid misspellings (e.g., *trip* instead of *voyage* or *journey*; *fun* instead of *exciting*).

o Negatively impacts perceptions about a child's competence as a writer.

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Spelling Impacts Writing

Learning about spelling can enhance children's reading development, especially their ability to pronounce words correctly and decode unknown words. (Adams)

Marilyn Jager Adams

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English:
A Morphophonemic Language

English is a morphophonemic language.
It relies on both **meaning** and **sound**.

morph = **meaning**   phone = **sound**

Research Shows…

Louisa Cook Moats

- "English words cannot be divided simply into two categories—regular and irregular—and teaching materials or tests that classify words in this way are over-simplifying linguistic reality. They are also falsely implying that these words are processed differently." (Moats, 123)

- "English orthography, when subjected to formal analysis, proves to be more predictable than often believed. We can make sense of most spellings of English words if we view them as multilayered representations of language structure and language history." (Moats, 125)

A few important takeaways….

- ☑ Students need instruction in multiple layers of English to become proficient spellers.
- ☑ Instruction should be daily, direct, and explicit, beginning in Pre-K.
- ☑ Instruction should involve opportunities to conduct word analysis and writing practice.
- ☑ Instruction should avoid attempts at memorizing words "by sight."
- ☑ Teachers require intensive training in phonology, orthography, and morphology linked with etymology to become facile with both the content and best practices for instruction.
  - "Understanding exactly how the English writing system works permits a teacher to make sense of English orthography for students. Informed word study entails not only phonics or sound-symbol correspondences, but also information about word origin, word history, word structure and meaning, and the patterns of allowable letter sequences in English." (Moats, 94)

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Thanks for Participating!

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SYNTAX MATTERS

The Link Between Sentence Writing & Sentence Comprehending

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What's Grammar?

o A language's grammar is its whole system and structure, including syntax and morphology.

o Confusingly, the term grammar is also used to define parts within sentences (e.g., noun, preposition, participle).

What's Syntax?

o If the grammar of a language is its system and structure, it makes sense today to focus on syntax, a key component of that grammar.

o Syntax is the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences. It's word order.

o We need a vocabulary to discuss syntax. In other words, we use terminology to facilitate our work in writing and reading.

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According to Moats…

"The order and grouping of words within a language system allows us to understand relationships among the ideas, such as subject-verb-object relationships…"
(Moats, 2020, 186).

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Playing with Syntax

Only!

She told him she loved him only.
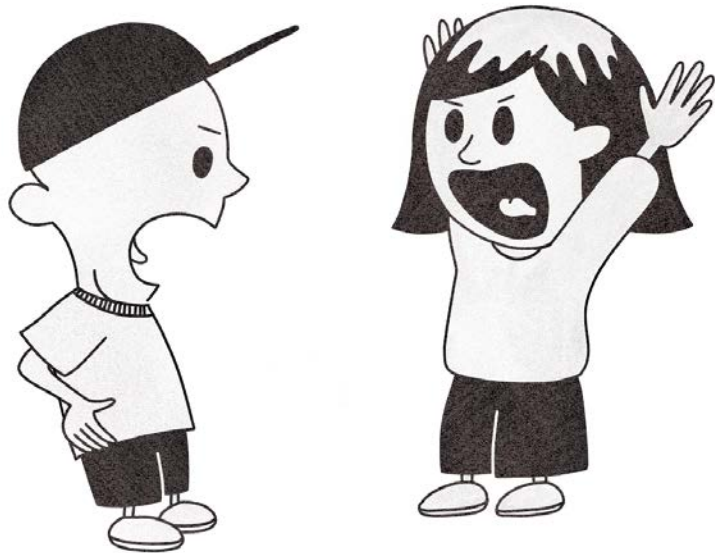She told him she loved only him.
She told him she only loved him.
She told him only she loved him.
She told only him she loved him.
She only told him she loved him.

Two Grammar Camps:

1

Teachers say…

Learning terminology and identifying/ labeling parts of speech and sentence parts is a necessary component of E.L.A. and makes better writers. Teach grammar in isolation.

2

Teachers say…

Explicit grammar instruction is useless as an activity, wastes valuable time, and makes students hate writing. Teach grammar incidentally as problems arise in student writing.

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Camp 1 Problems

Teachers say…

Learning terminology and identifying/ labeling parts of speech and sentence parts is a necessary component of E.L.A. and makes better writers.

Teach grammar in isolation.

Decades of research indicates that isolated grammar instruction does not improve writing.

Typically, when grammar is taught this way, students learn to fear or loathe it.

Camp 2 Problems

Teachers say…

Explicit grammar instruction is useless as an activity, wastes valuable time, and makes students hate writing. Teach grammar incidentally as problems arise in student writing.

- No overarching framework when taught only as problems arise

- Not enough practice to internalize concepts

- No link made between writing and reading comprehension

- No development of common vocabulary/language to talk about sentence structure

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3

A New Camp

Syntax instruction
can be both effective
and engaging.

Use the language of syntax to facilitate better writing and reading.

Teach concepts using a logical, sequential approach.

Avoid rote memorization and excessive labeling activities.

Create reinforcement activities that engage students in genuine reading comprehension and writing practice.

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Keep in mind...

If a concept does not improve student reading and/or writing, don't teach it!

Two Major Syntax Concepts

1 Parts of Speech

It's all about the job.

2 Sentence Parts

It's all about the clause.

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Parts of Speech (POS)

Focus students' attention on the **role a word plays** or **job a word has** in a sentence. Using parts of speech this way builds student writing and comprehending because it builds in students the ability to understand the way words relate to one another to convey meaning.

What Part of Speech is…

1. Man

2. Smooth

Parts of Speech
What Works

o Keep introduction brief and straightforward.

o Keep identification of various elements to a minimum.

o Focus primary teaching time on generating and discussing good examples.

o Remember that as students get older, they have typically studied the basic parts of speech multiple times already. Be ready to review quickly and then expand the depth of their knowledge.

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Parts of Speech
What Works

o If your students haven't generated any examples or practiced the concept in their own speaking and/or writing by the end of the lesson, you've missed the boat!

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Parts of Speech
I.E.C.C. Model

1. Identify – traditional labeling activity – helps students identify element in pre-existing sentences (small % of time)

2. Expand – sentence expansion – helps students expand basic sentences and ideas into more sophisticated ones

3. Combine – sentence combining – helps students combine basic sentences into more sophisticated ones

4. Create – sentence creating/writing – helps students apply studied element into the context of their own writing (most important activity)

POS: Conjunctions

Coordinating

Coordinating conjunction – joins 2 words or groups of words of equal standing.

- o Words: Jane and Sue

- o Phrases: in the kitchen or on the porch

- o Clauses: John went to the store, but it was closed.

co = with, together. Neither side is more important than the other. Coordinators share responsibility. No one is in charge.

POS: Conjunctions

Subordinating

Subordinating conjunction – begins a dependent clause, making it dependent.

- o while we were home

- o if Shelby eats her vegetables

- o because he wants a new bicycle

sub = under. The subordinating conjunction makes its clause subordinate to the independent or main clause. A subordinate serves under the leader.

FROM PARTS OF SPEECH TO SENTENCE PARTS

Sentence Parts & Kinds of Sentences

Every sentence must have a **subject** and its **predicate** .

1. The subject is **who or what is doing the action** – "**the doer** ."

   o The <u>hungry **man**</u> ate quickly.

     - Man is the simple subject. The hungry man is the complete subject.

2. The predicate is the **action** – "**the do** ."

   o The hungry man <u>**ate** quickly</u>.

     - Ate is the simple predicate. Ate quickly is the complete predicate.

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SP:
The Clause

Clauses are the building blocks of all sentences.

We combine clauses in different ways to show relationships between groups of words and to increase sentence variety.

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SP:
The Clause

Clauses are the building blocks of all sentences.

clause = group of words with subject and its predicate

$$clause \neq sentence$$

Some clauses can stand by themselves, and some cannot.

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Independent & Dependent Clauses

clause = group of words with subject and its predicate

Independent Clause	Dependent Clause
I clause that <u>can</u> stand by itself	D clause that <u>cannot</u> stand by itself

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Independent Clauses

Independent clauses (I) can stand alone.

- I painted a picture
- the teacher walked into the room
- my friends drank all the tea

Dependent Clauses

Dependent clauses (D) cannot stand alone.

o while I was napping

o if you finish your homework

o after we got home from school

Sentence Skills & Comprehension

A growing body of research (Scott 2009; Brimo et al, 2015) indicates that comprehension is connected not just to vocabulary but also to syntax.

o A student must understand 90-95% of the words on a page to understand the content (Nagy & J. Scott, 2000).

o That said, a student can understand all the words in a text and, due to syntax, still find that text incomprehensible.

Pulling it All Together:

Elements of a Sentence Structure Lesson

1. Instructor introduces the concept clearly and succinctly, using both a visual and a verbal description.

2. Students identify the element in pre-written sentences (a brief portion of the lesson).

3. Students conduct activities such as sentence expanding, combining, unscrambling, and imitating to practice their knowledge and application of the given element and to take the first steps towards enhancing their sentence-level writing.

(Van Cleave, Writing Matters, 2014)

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Pulling it All Together:

Elements of a Sentence Structure Lesson

4. Students create their own examples of the element.

5. Students share those examples with the class.

6. Instructor uses student examples to clarify and expand upon student knowledge.

(Van Cleave, Writing Matters, 2014)

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In Short:

The *Writing Matters* Approach

1. Introduce (briefly).

2. Identify (briefly).

3. Expand, combine, unscramble, imitate, etc.

4. Generate.

5. Share.

6. Discuss.

(Van Cleave, Writing Matters, 2014)

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Writing Matters is the centerpiece of a sentence-level approach to teaching writing. wvced.com

Syntax-level professional development is available to individuals and faculties. Please contact William at wvancleave@wvced.com to expore your options!
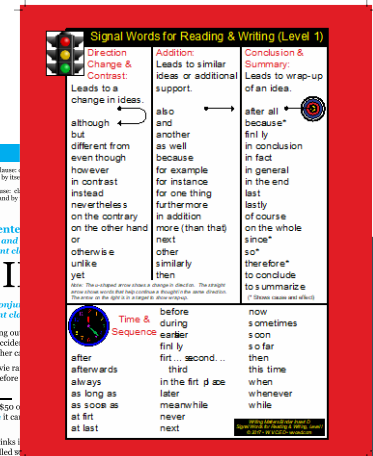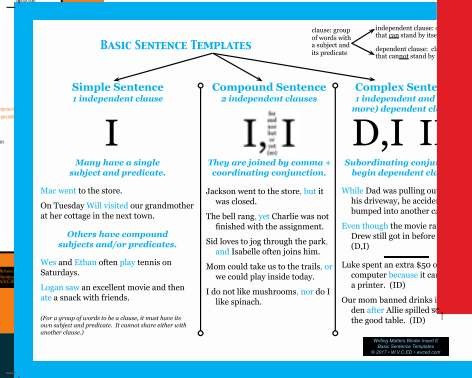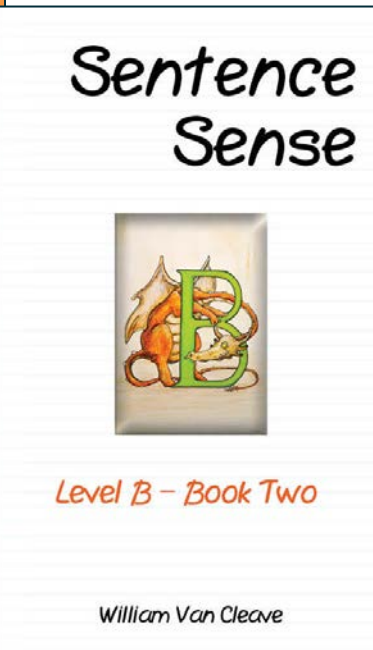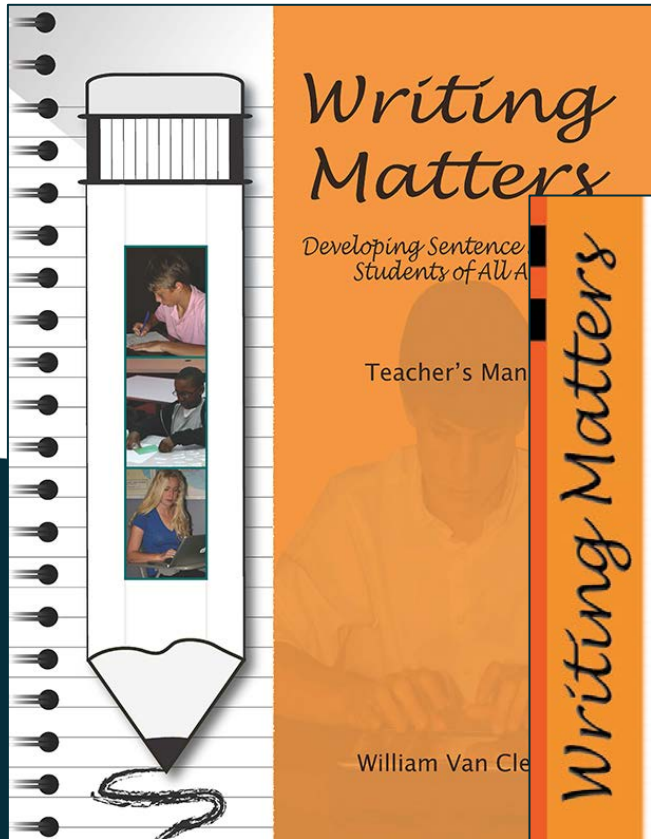
Syntax Intensives

1. These intensives are deep-dive, five-part, 7.5-hour courses.

2. They are limited to 25 participants each to keep them highly interactive.

3. We have filled 14 sections in the past 2 months.

4. Please email me for more information at wvancleave@wvced.com.

Thanks for Participating!

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wvancleave@wvced.com

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What is Executive Function?

"Executive function and self-regulation skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully."

Center on the Developing Child • Harvard University

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/

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"Writing is the act of dealing with an excessive number of simultaneous demands or constraints. Viewed this way, a writer in the act is a thinker on full-time cognitive overload."

(Flower and Hayes as cited by Torrance and Galbraith in MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, Handbook of Writing Research, 2008 Edition, 67)

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3 Strategies to Employ

o Release responsibility gradually.

o Write in front of students.

o Develop fledgling skills in isolation.

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1. Identify and write the topic.

2. Generate a list of items in support of that logic.
Select a minimum of three to use in your paragraphs.

3. Turn the topic into a topic sentence.

4. Turn the selected list items into supporting sentences.

5. Reword the topic sentence (perhaps expressing your opinion of the topic) as the concluding sentence.

Topic:
Nontraditional Pets

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Nontraditional Pets:

o Tarantula

o Velociraptor

o Racoon

o Iguana

o Boa Constrictor

o Ants/Farm

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Topic:
Nontraditional Pets

Topic Sentence:

Though some people have boring pets like dogs and cats, I prefer pets that are a little unusual.

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Topic:

Nontraditional Pets

Supporting Sentences:

SS1: Because they have hairy legs and eat annoying insects, I would love to have a few tarantulas in my room.

SS2: Probably the coolest pet to have would be a velociraptor, but I would have to keep it in the backyard, not my room.

SS3: A boa constrictor would be really cool to have because I could feed it live rodents that we would keep in the garage.

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Topic:
Nontraditional Pets

Concluding Sentence:

It would be great to have a pet that everyone talks about!

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Basic Paragraph Structure

o Topic Sentence

- o Supporting Sentence 1

- o Supporting Sentence 2

- o Supporting Sentence 3

o Concluding Sentence

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Expanded Paragraph Structure

- o Topic Sentence
  - o Supporting Sentence 1
    - o Detail 1
    - o Detail 2
  - o Supporting Sentence 2
    - o Detail 1
    - o Detail 2
  - o Supporting Sentence 3
    - o Detail 1
    - o Detail 2
- o Concluding Sentence

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Expanded Paragraph Structure

- ○ Topic Sentence
  - ○ Supporting Sentence 1
    - ○ Detail 1
    - ○ Detail 2
  - ○ Supporting Sentence 2
    - ○ Detail 1
    - ○ Detail 2
  - ○ Supporting Sentence 3
    - ○ Detail 1
    - ○ Detail 2
- ○ Concluding Sentence

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Expanded Paragraph Structure

- Topic Sentence
  - Supporting Sentence 1
    - Detail 1
    - Detail 2
  - Supporting Sentence 2
    - Detail 1
    - Detail 2
  - Supporting Sentence 3
    - Detail 1
    - Detail 2
- Concluding Sentence

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5-Sentence Paragraph Rubric	Expectations	4	3	2	1	Total
Topic/Concluding Sentences	o introduces topic effectively o engages/hooks reader o effectively rewords topic in concluding sentence					
Supporting Sentences	o includes at least 3 supporting sentences o refers to/supports topic sentence o follows logical order o transitions naturally					
Vocabulary	o uses strong words o varies word choice o maintains consistent tone					
Sentences	o uses complete sentences o varies sentence structure o varies sentence beginnings					
Mechanics, Spelling, & Handwriting	o uses correct capitalization/end punctuation o spells words correctly o uses legible handwriting					

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Citations & Resources

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Thanks for Participating!

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