Considerations for Targeting Writing as part of School-Based Language Interventions

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Speaker Disclosure

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- There are no non-financial relationships to disclose.

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Reading, Oral Language, and Writing Lab @ SHU

- http://blogs.shu.edu/row-lab/

- Facebook:
  https://www.facebook.com/ROWlab
- Twitter:
  – @thespeechguy

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Learner Outcomes

1) Participants will be able to discuss the three components of the Evidence-based practice (EBP) model and how this translates to academic success for children with language learning disabilities (LLD) in terms of written language output.

2) Participants will be able to describe two theories of writing and consider developmental differences between elementary, middle, and high school students.

3) Participants will be able to apply language transcription techniques to writing samples and develop treatment goals based on this analysis.

4) Participants will be able to identify key areas of weakness in the writing of children with language impairments and how to assess and target those deficits as part of language remediation.

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Why Writing?

Language is both oral and written…

- Oral Language
  - Speaking
  - Listening

- Written Language
  - Reading
  - Writing

(Berninger, 2000; Berninger & Abbott, 2010)

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Common Core Curriculum

- 2014-2015 implementation Nationwide (almost)
- Emphasis writing across all content areas including:
  - English Language Arts
  - Math
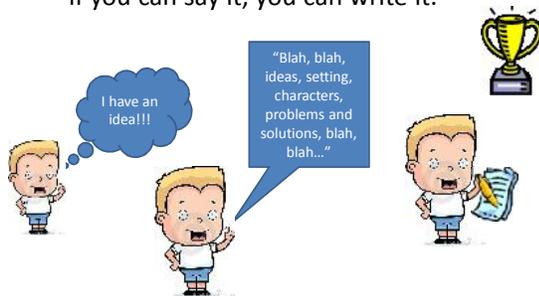 - Science
  - Social Studies

Writing is not just for stories anymore; children need to be proficient in writing in multiple genres.

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A Framework for Writing Instruction
(Berninger, et al., 2006)

- If you can think it, you can say it;
  if you can say it, you can write it.

I have an idea!!!

"Blah, blah, ideas, setting, characters, problems and solutions, blah, blah…"

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Research-Based (Analytic) Measures:
Narrative Writing

- Children with LLD produce significantly fewer words and fewer different words

- Grammatical accuracy is significantly poorer in children with LLD

- Inconsistent findings regarding syntactic complexity and content measures

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Spoken Narratives

- Liles and Associates (Liles, 1993; Merritt & Liles, 1987) utilized story grammar analyses to analyze spoken samples in children with and without LLD
  - Children with LLD demonstrate short, less complex narratives than peers with TD
  - Fewer complete episodes
  - Fewer use and types cohesive ties
  - More conjoined than embedded stories

- Scott and Windsor (2000) found that children with LLD demonstrate shorter narrative samples with more grammatical errors and poorer marking of grammatical inflections (Windsor, et al. 2000)

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Research-Based (Analytic) Measures: Expository

- Fewer studies have evaluated written expository samples.

- Children with LLD produce fewer words and demonstrate significantly poorer grammatical accuracy.

- Syntactic complexity appears to be similar between groups on expository tasks.
  - Why?

- SPOKEN EXPOSITORY
  - Nippold, et al. (2008) found that when comparing conversational and expository spoken discourse that ALL children demonstrated longer sentences with more subordination.
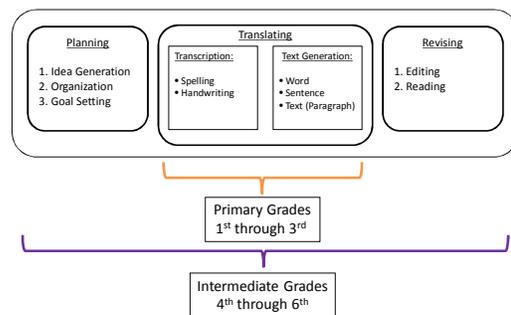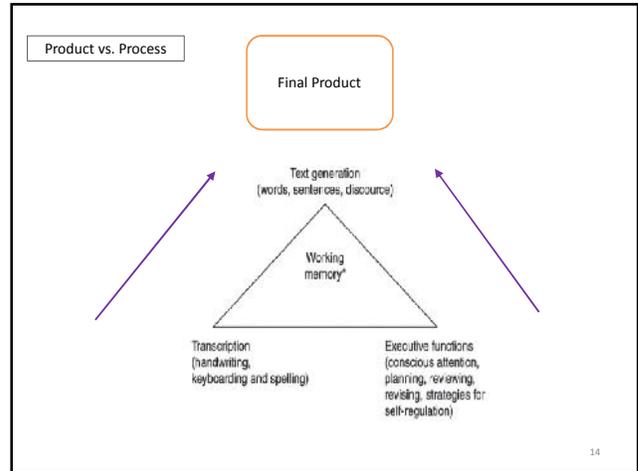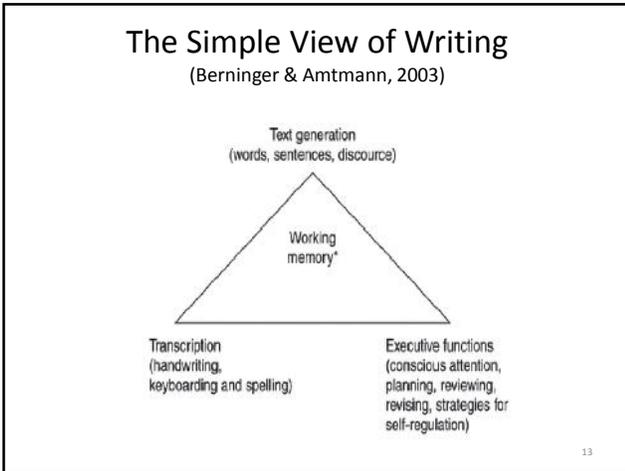
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Writing Process Model

Hayes and Flower (1980)

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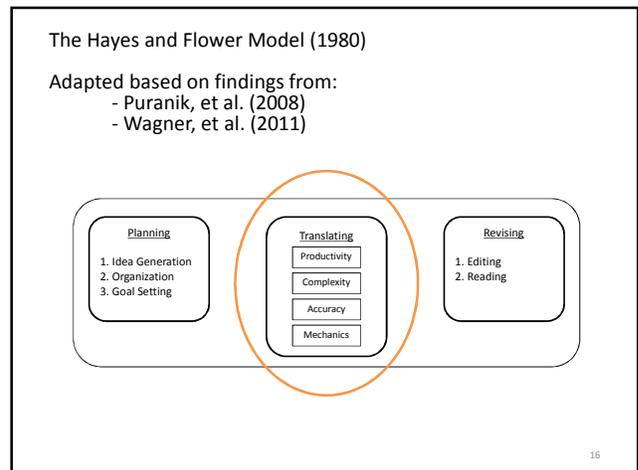The Hayes and Flower Model (1980)

- Adapted by Berninger & Swanson (1994) to explain the development of writing in elementary school children
- Findings from Berninger, et al. (1996) and Whitaker, et al. (1994)

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The Simple View of Writing
(Berninger & Amtmann, 2003)

Text generation
(words, sentences, discource)

Working memory*

Transcription
(handwriting, keyboarding and spelling)

Executive functions
(conscious attention, planning, reviewing, revising, strategies for self-regulation)

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Product vs. Process

Final Product

Text generation
(words, sentences, discource)

Working memory*

Transcription
(handwriting, keyboarding and spelling)

Executive functions
(conscious attention, planning, reviewing, revising, strategies for self-regulation)

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Where to focus instruction?
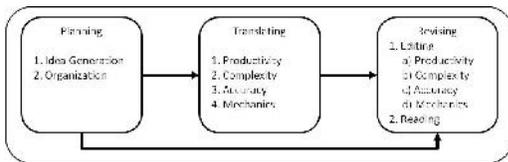
- Primary Grades (1st to 3rd)
  - Translation component
    - Transcription
    - Text generation: word and sentence
- Intermediate Grades (4th to 6th)
  - Planning component
    - Idea generation
    - Organization
    - Responding to prompt (genre specific instruction)
  - Translating component
    - Transcription (if necessary, spelling?)
    - Sentence construction
    - Text Level Instruction
      - Paragraph formulation
      - Stringing paragraphs together
  - Revising component
    - Editing
    - Clarity
    - Peer review

- Junior High to High School

  - *Coordination of all three components in a recursive manner (ala, adult model)*

  - Planning component
    - Idea generation
    - Organization
    - Goal Setting
    - Considerations of reader, listener
      - Theory of mind
  - Translating component
    - Transcription (Spelling)
      - Morphological vs. Orthographic spelling errors
    - Sentence construction
    - Paragraph construction
    - Coherence, Cohesion
  - Revising component
    - Editing
    - Reading for clarity
    - Theory of mind

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The Hayes and Flower Model (1980)

Adapted based on findings from:
- Puranik, et al. (2008)
- Wagner, et al. (2011)

Planning
1. Idea Generation
2. Organization
3. Goal Setting

Translating
Productivity
Complexity
Accuracy
Mechanics

Revising
1. Editing
2. Reading

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Slide 17

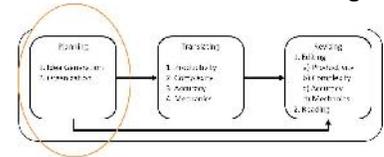### Writing Process Model, *Modified*
(Koutsoftas, 2010)

- A functional model of the writing process that takes current research in writing and presents in a way tangible to those of us instructing students in writing.

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Slide 18

Measuring Writing: Planning

What about graphic organizers?

Idea Generation
- Number of ideas generated
- Number of unique ideas generated

Organization
- How the ideas related to one another
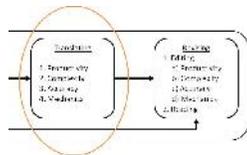- Sequence of story ideas (good opportunity to embed episodes)

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Slide 19

Measuring Writing: Translating

Productivity
- Total number of words
- Total number of sentences

Complexity
- *Number of Different Words*
- Clauses per sentence
- Words per sentence

Accuracy
- Grammatical
- Spelling

Mechanics
- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Paragraphing

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Slide 20

Productivity

- Total Number of Words

- Total Number of Sentences

- ~~Total Number of Paragraphs~~

- Type into Microsoft Word…check readability statistics.

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Complexity

- Number of Different Words

- Clauses per Sentence

- ~~Words per sentence~~

- SALT
  (http://www.saltsoftware.com/)
- CLAN
  (http://childes.psy.cmu.edu/)

- Counting clauses???
  - Remember to count the verbs/verb phrases…
  - A quick syntactical review

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Accuracy

- Grammatical errors per sentence

  - Subject-Verb Agreement
    - Inter-sentential
    - Intra-sentential
  - Pronominal Errors
  - Morphological Errors
  - -ed; -ing; -es; -s

- Proportion of different spelling errors (Silliman, et al., 2006)

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Spelling Error Patterns
(Silliman, et al., 2006)

- Phonological
  - bads → bags
  - suff → stuff

- Orthographic
  - ball → bal
  - dog → dawg

- Morphological
  - hug/hugged
  - their/there

Mechanics

- Capitalization
  - Beginning of sentences
  - Proper nouns
  - Beginning of quotes

- Punctuation
  - End of sentence punctuation
  - Comma usage
    - "What's the deal with the oxford comma?"
  - Quotation Marks
    - Let's discuss
  - ~~Colons & Semicolons~~

- Paragraphing
  - Indentation
  - Segmenting ideas
 - Regarding quotation marks

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Transcribing Language Samples

- Like transcribing spoken language samples, written language samples take time, but provide valuable data on a child's writing.

- Can be used as baseline data:
  - Identify treatment goals in terms of:
    - Productivity
    - Complexity
    - Accuracy
    - Mechanics

- Curriculum Based Measure

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Measuring Writing: Revising

Productivity
- Total number of words
- Total number of sentences

Complexity
- *Number of Different Words*
- Clauses per sentence
- Words per sentence

Accuracy
- Grammatical
- Spelling

Mechanics
- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Paragraphing
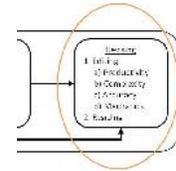
Evaluate the change from rough draft to final copy in each area:
- Increase
- Decrease
- No Change

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Academic Success In Writing

Assessment

Proficiency

College and Career Readiness

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To Do List…

- Get a writing sample from kiddos on your caseload

- Use writing to support and augment oral language goals you are already targeting
  - This is a reciprocal relationship so take advantage of it…

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To Do List…

- Get familiar with writing assessments conducted by your Local or State Education Agency
  - e.g., http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/
- Get familiar with your school/district approach to writing instruction
  - (align terms you use with kiddos on your caseload with the classroom teachers instruction and vice versa)

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Questions

Thank You

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Facebook: /ROWlab

Twitter: @thespeechguy

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