FEATURE ARTICLE

Quick Writing Instruction for the Content Classroom

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Researchers have established that when students use writing in content classrooms knowledge is acquired and demonstrated (Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, & Wilkinson, 2008) and critical thinking is facilitated (Deshler, Palincsar, Biancarosa, & Nair, 2007). Moreover, recent standards initiatives (e.g., CCSS, 2010) emphasize the importance of writing to support learning across academic domains. In this DLD brief, procedures for teaching struggling writers how to self-regulate one content classroom activity, quick writing, are described.

Quick writing is a short constructed response activity used to activate or assess students' knowledge on a particular topic (Fisher & Frey, 2008). Quick writes can be used at the beginning, middle, or end of a lesson and can serve a number of purposes such as supporting students' prior knowledge acquisition, recall, or summarization (Mason, Benedek-Wood, & Valasa, 2009). Teachers typically present quick writes by giving a prompt or posing a question related to content instruction, and then by providing students with up to 10 minutes to write. A math teacher may ask students to write about everything they know about probability to assess prior knowledge. To assess knowledge during a long unit on the universe, a science teacher may ask students to compare and contrast the three main types of galaxies. A social studies teacher may ask students to write a persuasive argument for, or against, *Citizens United*.

Although quick writes have been recommended for use in content classrooms since the 1980s, little research has addressed how to help students, including those with learning disabilities (LD), who have difficulty demonstrating what has been learned through writing (Mason, Kubina, & Taft, 2009). When given a quick write prompt, these struggling writers often do not use writing time efficiently to address the topic adequately. For example, when asked, "What did you learn about weather factors?" a student (a.k.a. Simon) used approximately 3 minutes to write:

I've learned that global winds travel all over the globe. Local winds travel through a small section. Land breeze is when there's air from land and it flows to a ocean, lake, etc. Sea breeze is when there's a breeze in the sea and it flows to the land. Energy from the sun is the sun's rays, which produce energy. When winds curve it's called the Coriolis [sic] effect.

Although Simon presented several details about weather, his organization is weak, missing the topic and ending sentence. Simon did not elaborate on details or use transitions from one sentence to the next. Simon's response was disjointed and provided the reader with limited information about weather factors. Fortunately, we have found that deficits such as those illustrated

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in Simon's pre-instruction quick write can be remediated by teaching quick writing within the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model of instruction.

SRSD for Quick Writing

SRSD instruction targets many areas in planning and composing in which writers struggle (Harris & Graham, 2009). SRSD, when specifically developed for a timed quick writing response, promotes students' cognitive and self-regulation strategies so they can better understand and regulate this type of writing task (Mason, Reid, & Hagaman, 2012). In SRSD, teachers scaffold responsibility for strategy use during the quick writing process by gradually shifting from teacher-led instruction to student-led self-regulation. The six instructional stages—1) develop pre-skills and background knowledge, 2) discuss it, 3) model it, 4) memorize it, 5) support it, and 6) independent practice—facilitate the student's mastery of strategy use during quick writing. Four self-regulation processes (goal setting, self-monitoring, self-instructions, and self-reinforcement) are imbedded throughout instruction. Instruction is criterion based rather than time based. In other words, students must demonstrate that they have mastered each skill or procedure needed for effective quick writing before they move to the next phase of instruction.

Methods for SRSD for quick writing have been validated in one-to-one and small group instruction (e.g., Mason, Kubina, & Taft, 2006), and in whole class instruction (e.g., Benedek-Wood, Mason, Wood, Hoffman, & MacGuire, in press). To facilitate generalization across writing genres, quick writes are taught within a three-part umbrella strategy, POW (Pick my idea, Organize my notes, Write and say more). Students organize their notes for informative quick writing using TIDE[2] (Topic sentence, Important Details, Elaborations, Ending sentence) and for persuasive quick writing using TREE (Topic sentence, Reasons: 3 or more + a counter reason: 3 or more + a refute, Ending sentence). Given the parameters of quick writing (e.g., short constructed timed response), instruction for adolescents can often be completed in five to seven 30-minute lessons plus two to three 10-minute practice sessions. We illustrate instruction for POW + TIDE[2] for informative quick writing as highlighted in Benedek-Wood et al. (in press), a study conducted in Mr. Wood's four 6th grade science classrooms. All quick writing instruction was situated within science curriculum and objectives.

[2]The "squared" in POW + TIDE[2] is to reinforce the use of elaborations when writing an informative quick write.

Mr. Wood's Instruction. Many students lack the critical skills needed for understanding and writing about content material. During *develop pre-skills and background knowledge*, Mr. Wood remediated these deficits prior to introducing quick writing with planned focus lessons. For example, many of his students did not use content specific academic vocabulary in their writing. Mr. Wood delivered a mini-lesson on how to use science vocabulary words correctly in complete sentences. Mr. Wood first modeled writing a few sentences and then asked students to help him write sentences in a guided practice activity.

When introducing the quick write strategies during *discuss it*, Mr. Wood explicitly explained, while referring to the mnemonics chart below, the purpose of each strategy step for the learning process. Model paper examples of quick writes were read and students' pre-instruction quick writes were evaluated. The first self-regulation procedure, setting goals for learning and applying the strategy, were established.

POW + TIDE[2]

P Pick my idea
O Organize my notes
W Write and Say more

T Topic sentence
    Tell the reader your main idea.

I Important
    Will your reader think your idea is important?

D Details
    Be sure to include at least 3 details.

    Will your reader think your details are important?

E² Elaborate!
    Can you say more about each detail?

    Ending sentence

T TOPIC Sentence
Tell the main idea! Will your reader think this idea is important?

Transition Words	ID Important Details -3 or More Will your reader think each detail is Important?	E Elaborate: Can you say more about the detail?

E ENDING

In *model it*, Mr. Wood thought out loud the before, during, and after writing processes while using all instructional materials (e.g., writing notes on the graphic organizer above) and self-regulation procedures (e.g., self-monitoring by charting performance, self-instruction through self-talk, and positive self-reinforcement). Mr. Wood included statements that addressed his students' specific needs throughout his modeling. For example, several students had difficulty writing simple notes for "Organize my notes" in POW. Mr. Wood demonstrated how to write notes by talking through the process (e.g., "For the O step in POW, I want to write down a few words for each part. I will write interesting sentences when I get to the W step, Write and Say more"). Mr. Wood used modeling twice during instruction: (1) to model how

to write an informative quick write with POW + TIDE[2], and (2) to model how to write in a 10 minute time frame.

During *memorize it*, students recited the steps of POW + TIDE[2] and, more importantly, they described what is required at each step level. For students with memorization difficulties, Mr. Wood provided cue cards and other visual cues. Memorization was practiced throughout POW + TIDE[2] lessons.

In guided practice, the *support it* stage, Mr. Wood worked collaboratively with student groups, with student pairs, and with individual students. Instructional support materials were faded, and responsibility for POW + TIDE[2] application was shifted from the teacher to the student. Lessons transition from 30-minute heavily supported lessons to 10-minute practice sessions. Mr. Wood scaffolded support until his students' demonstrated mastery in applying the POW + TIDE[2] strategies to write in 10 minutes. For example, when Simon was asked, "What did you learn about the Earth in Space?" he used the full 10 minutes to write:

Today I'm going to tell you what I learned about Earth's movement, the seasons, and the effects of gravity. First, I'm going to talk about Earth's movement. The Earth moves in two main ways. One way is rotation. The Earth makes a full rotation every 24 hours. The other way it moves is revolution. Earth revolves around the sun. The moon revolves around Earth. Next, I'm going to talk about the seasons. There are 4 seasons. Their names are spring, summer, fall, and winter. Spring and fall both have an equinox. An equinox is when there are 12 hours of day and night. Winter and summer both have a solstice. The summer solstice is the longest day of the year. However, the winter solstice is the shortest. Finally, I'm going to talk about the effects of gravity. Inertia is the moon's gravity. It and Earth's gravity keep the moon in orbit. That is what I learned about Earth's movements, seasons, and gravity.

In this quick write, Simon included a topic sentence that clearly introduces the terms to be discussed. Simon then presented details about each term and elaborates on each detail by providing more information and/or examples. His elaborations not only better informed the reader, but also demonstrated his level of understanding for this particular topic. Throughout the response, Simon included transition words such as *first, next, however,* and *finally*. Lastly, Simon included a clear ending sentence that wraps up the response.

After SRSD instruction and during *independent practice,* students worked independently while Mr. Wood monitored their quick writing performance. At this time, Mr. Wood began to plan instruction for a new genre (e.g., POW + TREE for persuasive writing) and planned for students' generalization practice of POW + TIDE[2] to other tasks. Students and Mr. Wood celebrated their success in learning and applying quick writing for learning in science!

Tips for Instruction

Prior to instruction, teachers should consider the academic content, the genre, and the prompts to be used during instruction.

For example, introducing quick writing in conjunction with difficult, dense content can frustrate both teacher and students. Although genre order for instruction can be flexible, only one genre-specific strategy should be taught at a time, teaching until students are independent. Writing prompts should be scaled in complexity. For example, a teacher may ask, "What did you learn about the effect of The Great Depression on American farm families?" when students are first learning to apply a strategy. Later, the teacher may ask students to, "Define *The New Deal*, and note resulting programs that are still in effect today."

Students should be encouraged throughout the *support it* stage to check for academic vocabulary use and to always write and say more. Graphing charts are especially effective for developing this aspect of students' self-regulation. Once students are efficient quick writers, performance should be generalized to other tasks such as journaling and homework. Quick writes should be ungraded for writing mechanics (e.g., punctuation, spelling, and grammar), as the purpose of a quick write is to provide students with an opportunity to reflect, articulate, and elaborate on what they have learned. But, most importantly, teachers need to continue to provide opportunities for the students' writing success by maintaining quick writing in their content classrooms.

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Hello! My name is David Chard and I am honored to serve this year as the President of the **Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD).** In my day job I'm the inaugural dean of the Simmons School of Education and Human Development at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas. I have been dean at SMU Simmons for seven years. During that time, I have worked to build a strong program in research and teaching with a growing faculty and staff. Before coming to SMU, I was a faculty member at the University of Oregon and before that at University of Texas at Austin and Boston University. Before I was a faculty member, I was a high school mathematics and chemistry teacher in California, Michigan, and in the U.S. Peace Corps in Lesotho. Like most of the members of DLD, my participation stems from my interest in ensuring that students with Learning Disabilities (LD) get high quality education.

David Chard

It is an exciting and tumultuous time in our field. States are trying to determine the advantage of adopting and implementing the Common Core State Standards, questions remain about how the related tests will impact students with LD, and teachers, principals, and schools are under heightened scrutiny to demonstrate that they are helping *all* children to achieve. It is times like these that we believe associations such as the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and DLD can help education professionals to do the best possible job at meeting the needs of all students. However, memberships are down in teaching organizations across the country. This suggests that we need to work smarter to demonstrate our value to those members of DLD who are in the classroom. We hope that you'll reach out to us with suggestions of how we can accomplish this important part of our work. In the meantime, DLD has a number of resources that we think can support teachers, administrators, and related service personnel in their efforts to educate students with LD. They include: webinars on important instructional topics, materials to guide webinar discussions, white papers or chapters addressing critical issues in our field, and other members-only publications such as the *Current Practice Alerts*, the DLD newsletter, and *HotSheets*. Despite this list of resources, we need to hear from you about what else would be helpful.

Your incredible DLD Leadership team is also working behind the scenes to support DLD's mission. This fall we will co-host a symposium with the SMU Simmons School in Dallas focused on evidence-based practices in teaching students with LD. This joint initiative is designed to bring the latest research findings to a densely populated region of the country (North Texas) in order to help teachers and school leaders to serve their students better. The symposium will feature DLD members from the region as well as members of the DLD Board who will focus on Response-to-Intervention models, research on reading, mathematics, social development, writing, and evidence-based decision making. If y'all are in the region or feel like a visit to the Big D, please join us.

In addition to our ongoing efforts, the DLD Board will be taking up a number of important issues related to congressional action, forging partnerships with other key LD advocacy groups (e.g., CLD, NCLD), advising CEC and other member organizations on topics such as teacher evaluations, and implementation of the Common Core State Standards. We remain hopeful that in the next few months we will see efforts in Congress to pass a reauthorized *Education Science Reform Act*, and may even see some action on the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and the *Higher Education Act*. DLD will follow any important developments and keep you updated on their implications.

I look forward to my year as President of DLD and hope that you all will reach out to your colleagues and help them see what a strong and supportive organization DLD can be for its members.

Let us know how we can support you, and stay in touch.
David Chard
Pres@TeachingLD.org

CALL FOR STUDENT PROPOSALS
FOR POSTER PRESENTATIONS

The Executive Board of the Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD) invites interested university **undergraduate** and **graduate** students who are members of DLD to submit proposals for poster presentations. These posters will be displayed during the DLD Reception at the CEC Convention in San Diego. Be on the lookout for the official call for proposals which will go out in early December. Questions? Contact **Miriam Ortiz**, DLD Student Representative, at StudRep@TeachingLD.org. Visit TeachingLD.org for additional information about this and other initiatives of the Division for Learning Disabilities.

DLD Research Newsletter Research and Evidence-based Practices

By Michael Dunn

A variety of legislation and initiatives, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), have resulted in the need for improved student performance, which in turn has driven evidence-based reforms in special education. Evidence-based practice refers to an approach for instructional decision-making that is informed, but not dictated by, research. That is, research support should not be the only concern when making instructional decisions; rather, practices supported by credible research should be prioritized when they align with stakeholder values, expertise, and experiences. Students with learning disabilities (LD) often experience low outcomes in areas such as reading, writing, and math, and need evidence-based practice to achieve their potentials.

Scholars have developed guidelines for identifying evidence-based practices (i.e., practices supported as highly effective by credible bodies of research) for learners with disabilities (e.g., Council for Exceptional Children, 2014; Gersten et al., 2005; Horner et al., 2005; National Autism Center, 2009; What Works Clearinghouse, 2013). Although these standards differ in their specifics, they all require that evidence-based practices be supported as effective by multiple research studies that: (a) use research designs from which causality can be inferred (e.g., group experimental studies, single-case designs) and (b) address indicators of high quality research.

The Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Learning Disabilities encourages all stakeholders to engage in evidence-based practice when working with students with LD. That is, alongside student needs, practitioner expertise, and family values, research evidence should be a primary consideration when making instructional decisions. We encourage stakeholders to use existing resources that identify which practices are evidence-based for students with LD (see Santangelo, Ruhaak, Kama, & Cook, 2013 for a discussion of online resources). Implementing evidence-based practices as designed (i.e., with fidelity) can be challenging and should be facilitated by ongoing supports (e.g., coaching; see Cook & Odom, 2013). Additionally, because no practice will work for every learner, it is important that educators formatively assess the performance of students with LD and adjust instruction according to the results, even when using evidence-based practices.

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CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the positions of Treasurer and Vice President are now open! If you are interested or know of others who might be, please send names and contact information to PastPres@TeachingLD.org. Self-nominations are welcome.

Publications and Communications

By Bill Therrien

DLD has been busy over the past year publishing material we hope is of value to you.

Two position papers were published in February and March of this year. In the first paper, **Sharon Vaughn** and colleagues examine effective practices for students with LD within the context of RTI. They strongly make the case that students with LD, "…need intensive individual interventions based on the best available evidence to help them improve in their areas of need…"

The second position paper, authored by **Janette Klingner** and colleagues, delineates essential instructional components of special education for English Language Learners. Along with the position papers, a new *Current Practice Alert on Learning Styles* has recently been released. All these resources and more are available for you on our website: TeachingLD.org.

I am pleased to announce that **Sarah Watt** from Miami University has graciously agreed to assume the *New Times for DLD* Co-Editor role, and is now working alongside **Mira Cole Williams**, the *New Times* current Editor.

Speaking of the *New Times*, we completed our transition to an all-electronic format this past year. Many thanks go to **John Lloyd**, DLD Executive Director/Web Editor, and **Peggy Weiss**, DLD Treasurer/Web Editor for overseeing this transition.

Last, I would like to thank the members of the Publications Committee, **Shaqwana Freeman-Green**, **Kristen Ashworth**, **Delinda van Garderen**, **Douglas Dexter** and **Hank Fien**, for all their hard work. The publications committee had a lot on its plate this last year and I anticipate that the workload will only increase this coming year as we diligently work to provide DLD members with the information they need to work effectively with, and advocate for students with learning disabilities.

Please email me at Pubs@TeachingLD.org with questions, comments or ideas you have about publications provided by DLD.

CALL FOR LDRP EDITOR

The Council for Exceptional Children, Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD), seeks applications for a new Editor of *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice* (LDRP) for a three year term beginning July 1, 2015.

LDRP provides a forum for presentation of current research in the field of learning disabilities, and acts as a vehicle for dissemination of information important to practitioners in the field. Because learning disabilities is a multidisciplinary field of study, LDRP publishes articles addressing the nature and characteristics of children and adults with learning disabilities, program development, assessment practices, and instruction from many different perspectives. In so doing, LDRP provides valuable information to professionals involved in diverse disciplines including special education, school psychology, counseling, reading, and medicine. Two separate sections—research and practice—are distinguished with respect to content and manuscript style.

Nominations, including self-nominations, should be sent to DLD's Publication and Communications Committee Chair, Bill Therrien at Pubs@TeachingLD.org by December 1, 2014.

Candidates will be contacted and asked to submit the following by January 1, 2015: (1) Vision statement for the journal, (2) CV, (3) Name and contact information for three references, and (4) Letter documenting institutional support for assuming Editorship. Interviews with finalists will be conducted in February 2015.

The following criteria will be utilized when assessing candidates:

- A clear, innovative vision for LDRP
- Outstanding publication record in LD related area
- Prior demonstration of excellent management and organizational skills
- Prior editorial work
- Institutional support

DLD Program Update for the CEC conference in San Diego

DLD was fortunate to have 117 proposals submitted for review for the CEC program in San Diego. However, we only had slots for 47 sessions and posters. Every attempt was made to accept sessions as multiple presentation (this year with no more than two sets of presenters in each 1-hour presentation) to be able to accept each of the high quality proposals we received. Each proposal was rated by external reviewers who were hand-selected because of their expertise in the areas of learning disabilities, instructional strategies, etc. Following rating by reviewers, the proposal rankings and comments were reviewed and rank ordered. The top proposals were accepted and then those that were on the cusp were reviewed again, noting content, comments, and ranking. Finally, some participants were contacted to assure that they were willing to take an alternate session or a multiple presentation session and decisions were submitted. The process was systematic and detailed, with each step documented.

In the future, in order to accommodate more of the excellent proposals we receive, we are hoping to put 3 teams in each multiple presentation slot. This will mean that content will need to be streamlined. However, we feel that it's important to have an opportunity for as many participants as possible to present their high quality content.

If you had doctoral students who submitted to CEC this year and were not accepted, please encourage them to submit a proposal to the DLD student poster session. See page four of this newsletter or more information can be found on the TeachingLD.org website.

Thank you again for your submissions and we look forward to seeing you and learning from you in San Diego!

SAVE THE DATE!

CEC 2015 Convention and Expo, April 8-11, 2015 in San Diego, CA

Registration for **CEC 2015** is now open and our early bird pricing is available October 1, 2014 to January 15, 2015.

To register visit: http://cecconvention.org/register/

CEC has negotiated travel discounts and secured a limited number of reduced-rate hotel rooms to make your trip to San Diego affordable. Through the travel experts at onPeak, rooms at the group rate are limited and available on a first come, first-served basis. Book early for best selection and price http://cecconvention.org/hotels/

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Meet our Officers, Committee Chairs, and Editors.

Go to: http://teachingld.org/officers and click on an officer's name (if highlighted) to view a brief biography. To contact a member of the executive board, visit: http://teachingld.org/contact_forms/new