B L U E P R I N T S

WRITING

Blueprints
for
Writing

SCALE = 1 : 1

BLUEPRINTS
WRITING

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by Constance McAvoy

SCALE = 1 : 1

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Blueprints for Writing Booklet

Why must educators and parents consider assistive technology?

Rationale: • **to promote independent writing**

• **to facilitate student access to appropriate writing resources**

        and

• **to focus on the continuum of activities which address growth in**

   independent writing skills

A comment from the parents of a secondary student, who participated in the writing research project, using the word prediction program Co:Writer:

> **D had a hard time writing sentences. With Co:Writer, D was able to write and spell and make sense in his writing, which he was not able to do before. … D got more and more confidence with himself in doing his (writing) tasks. After each visit, D felt better and better about himself. We, as parents, saw the big difference in D. He was a lot happier with himself and talked about his time on the Co:Writer and what he accomplished.**

Writing Level – Assistive Technological Plan

This plan will require analysis of writing skills in order to identify useful assistive writing software strategies that support a continuum of writing activities to promote growth in independent writing ability. Assistive software is identified to allow access to resources that support writing, since, until this time, the student was unable to participate independently in written communication activities.

Writing can be analyzed based on holistic writing assessment score. Holistic assessment is based on over-all impressions of the reader and is scored by degree of effectiveness of a whole piece of writing. A holistic scoring guide is outlined on the following page.

Holistic Scoring Guide

Score	Description of writing

Score   **Description of writing**

6   **Superior**

A superior response. Not only complete the assigned task, but provided vivid and particular detail.

5   **Strong**

Strongly accomplishes the task. The writing is literate and orderly.

4   **Competent**

Accomplishes the task in a minimal way. The detail is not particularly distinct.

3   **Weak**

Not much or unclear detail. Loses track of purpose of the writing. Many patterns of error.

2   **Inadequate**

Confuses the assignment. Superficial language. Serious problems expressing detail.

1   **Incompetent**

Inability to do the assignment.

Word Prediction Strategy

Skill Description

the student is able to:

- identify the beginning letter of a word by typing on a keyboard
- spell some words
- can recognize some words with assistance of auditory feedback

the student is unable to:

- spell correctly
- express thoughts intelligibly in written form
- express thoughts in sentences

Suggested Strategy

- Word Prediction Software

Word Prediction Software

Word prediction software allows the student to type beginning letter(s) of the required word and then select the word from a word list which refreshes with each subsequent keystroke. Word list dictionaries can be customized for individual use.

If the student is unable to spell a word but wishes to write it, the student must type in the first and perhaps subsequent letters of the word in order to find and select the required word. The word list can be heard, word by word, through auditory feedback capabilities in the software.

Comment: Students use this software intuitively. Training for beginner use is not intensive for the student or the instructor. Features within the program allow for word entry in order to

facilitate personal dictionary of needed words and phrases. Prompts for consistent user spelling

errors can be programmed through the expansion capabilities in the software.

Word Prediction Software Titles:

Macintosh	Windows
Co:Writer	Key Rep
	WiVik 2 (on screen keyboard) with Key Rep
	Co:Writer

Talking Word Processor Strategy

Skill Description

the student is able to:

- spell some words
- recognize and correct misspellings when prompted
- track text as it is read

the student is unable to:

- spell majority of words correctly
- express thoughts intelligibly in written form

Suggested Strategy

- Talking Word Processor with talking spell checker
- Real-time spell checking with auditory feedback

Talking word Processor

The student can hear words as he types them. This serves two functions:

1. reinforces correct spelling
2. prompts corrections on misspellings

Spell Checker

The student can correct misspelled words. This option is able to generate suggested spelling for phonetically misspelled words. It is a valuable tool for the student who is unable to spell words at the desired level for written output. (See glossary for more spell check information).

Talking Word Processor Software

Mac	Windows
Intellitalk	Intellitalk
Write Out Loud	Write Out Loud ver. 3

Phonetic Spell Checker

Mac	IBM
ClarisWorks	ClarisWorks
Write Out Loud ver. 3	Word 8
	Write Out Loud ver. 3

Real-Time Spell Checker

	IBM
	TextHELP!

BLUEPRINTS Phonetic Spell Checker and Writing Template

Skill Description

the student is able to:

- spell most words correctly

the student is not able to:

- spell words at the desired level of written output
- display adequate writing structure in written work

Suggested Strategy

- Phonetic Spell Checker
- Writing Structure Templates

Phonetic Spell Checker

This option is able to generate suggested spelling for phonetically misspelled words. See glossary for more spell check information.

Writing Templates

Writing templates are created within a word processor. They are saved as template files for infinite use.

Templates (termed scaffolding **Blueprints**) for standard writing activities have been developed through research with learning disabled adolescents. Samples are included in this booklet.

BLUEPRINTS Glossary WRITING

Assistive Technological Features

        Word Prediction

        Spell Checker

        Online Spell Checker

        Real-Time Spell Checker

        Traditional Spell Checker

        Problem Solving Within a Spell Checker

        Phonetic Capabilities

        Word Processor

        Auditory Feedback

Assistive Writing Features

        Scaffold – Blueprint

        Outline

Kinds of Paragraph Writing

        Narrative

        Descriptive

        Expository

        Persuasive

        Imaginative

"The most frequently expected structures of writing include reports, narratives, explanations, procedures, augumentatives, and discussions."

        Bereiter and Scaramalia (1987)

Assistive Technological Features

Word Prediction

Word prediction is designed to run on line with any word processing program. Word prediction employs frequency weighting wherein words predicted are displayed based on frequency of use in output. Multiple topic files can be created. Dictionary size is adjustable. Dictionaries can be customized or standard dictionaries can be edited. Word display and word selection has auditory feedback options. Sentence display has auditory feedback options. Display size is an option to meet access needs for the visually impaired.

Some word prediction programs use syntactic rules to limit the words predicted for grammatically based word prediction.

Spell Checker

The spell checker scans text and stops to display words which are incorrectly spelled (i.e. not found in the dictionary of the word processor).

Phonetic spell checking capabilities provide spell checking suggestions for words that are formed phonetically approximate to the sounds that exist in the word form attempted.

Online Spell Checker

Online spell checkers work as you type. Word 97 has an online spell checker. When the spelling options are turned on, Word indicates a questionable spelling by underlining it in red. When using a right mouse click, a suggestion pop box appears onscreen. The writer simply clicks on the word to replace the misspelled word.

Some word processing programs have the option to hear a tone or see the screen flash when a questionable spelling is entered. Write Out Loud has this feature.

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Real-Time Spell Checker

Real-time spell checkers appear as you type. TextHELP! has a real-time spell checker. When real-time spelling is turned on, a suggestion box appears whenever a questionable spelling is entered. The suggestion box is particularly useful as it has full auditory feedback. The advantage of auditory feedback is that the client can confirm the word that is being chosen by listening to the pronunciation, before they choose to select a word to replace the word that is misspelled.

Traditional Spell Checker

The traditional spell checker option is accessible through the tools available in the program.

Problem Solving Within a Spell Checker

Spell checkers, in which the user can problem solve while correcting an error, are very useful.

ClarisWorks has a spell checker that has problem solving capabilities. Look for the Check option within the ClarisWorks spell checker (note: ClarisWorks has been renamed AppleWorks).

Word 97 (aka Word 8) has problem solving capabilities that are not obvious. When a suggestion box is not helpful, the user is able to make changes directly to the word (shown in context) and then click Change to replace the spelling error with the newly typed entry. If the spelling attempt is again incorrect, Word 97 will alert you to the fact that this is still an error.

Phonetic Capabilities

It is especially helpful when spell checkers have phonetic capabilities. Word and ClarisWorks deal capably with phonetic spelling errors.

The Franklin spell checker is a hand-held spell checking device. Write Out Loud, version 3, created by Don Johnston Inc., has the Franklin spell checker built into it.

Word Processor

An application program for the production of text. Many valuable functions are available in most word processors. Spell checking is one function typically available in a word processor.

Auditory Feedback

Talking word processors make available levels of speech output such as individual words, sentences, paragraphs, selected text and entire document. Pronunciation editing is the ability to edit the phonetic rendering of words so that they are pronounced correctly by the speech synthesizer. Highlighting is when words are highlighted as they are read. This facilitates tracking of text as it is read.

Assistive Writing Features

Scaffold – Blueprint

Scaffolding refers to special ways instructors may elaborate and expand upon student's early attempts to use language, thereby facilitating effective language at a level somewhat beyond the student's actual linguistic capability. Assisting readers with discourse structures enhances comprehension.

Writing scaffolds refer to temporary frameworks that offer students immediate access to the structure expected for a particular piece of writing.

Many types of writing have an internal structure. Scaffolding is an attempt to make the framework explicit and allow the student to focus on the content rather than figuring out both the structure and the content. Topic headings, questions, or a blueprint for structure can be used to assist students in understanding the structure for their writing.

Outline

An outline is used to organize facts and ideas. It is a plan which helps organize ideas into headings and supporting ideas. This builds the structure for the paragraph(s).

An interactive outliner can run unobtrusively within a word processing program assisting in organization of content through activities such as brainstorming and recursive revision of ideas. It can be accessed through an on-screen menu. Entries in the outline are fully interactive. Any entry can be moved and dropped within the outline with ease. Outline entries are unlimited. Words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs can be entries.

Kinds of Paragraph Writing

Narrative (personal experience)

This writing tells a story that happened or could have happened. The writing has a clear

and complete storyline that is easy to follow.
Descriptive

This writing tells about an object, feelings, a place, or a person to make a clear, detailed

picture in the reader's mind. The paper creates a strong image or impression in the

reader's mind through well-chosen details.
Expository

This writing gives information, teaches or explains. The writing presents information

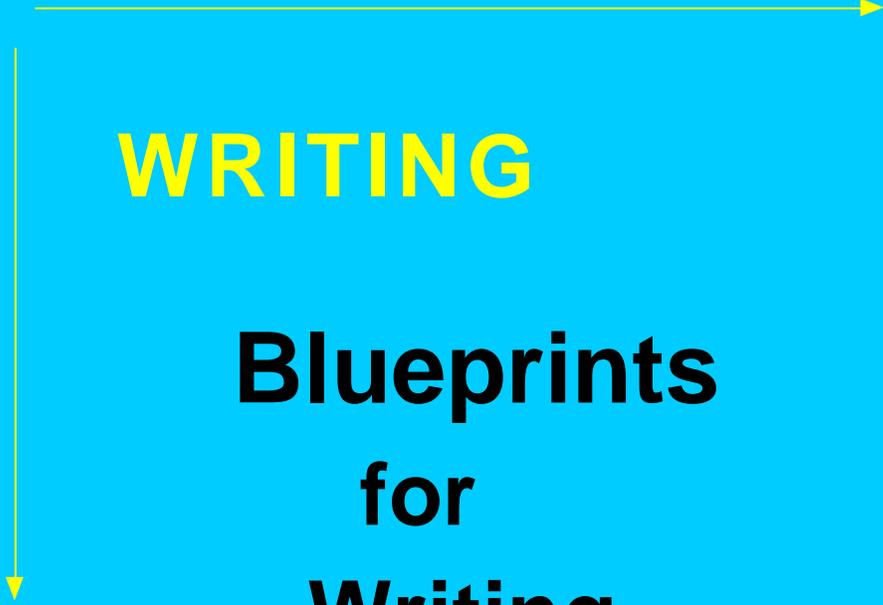that expands the reader's knowledge or understanding.
Persuasive

This writing takes a stand and tries to convince the reader to agree. The issue is clearly

stated and presented in a clear way.
Imaginative

This writing tells about something that is not real. This writing is creative and inventive.

It can amuse, surprise or educate the reader.

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WRITING

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by Constance McAvoy

BLUEPRINTS
►WRITING

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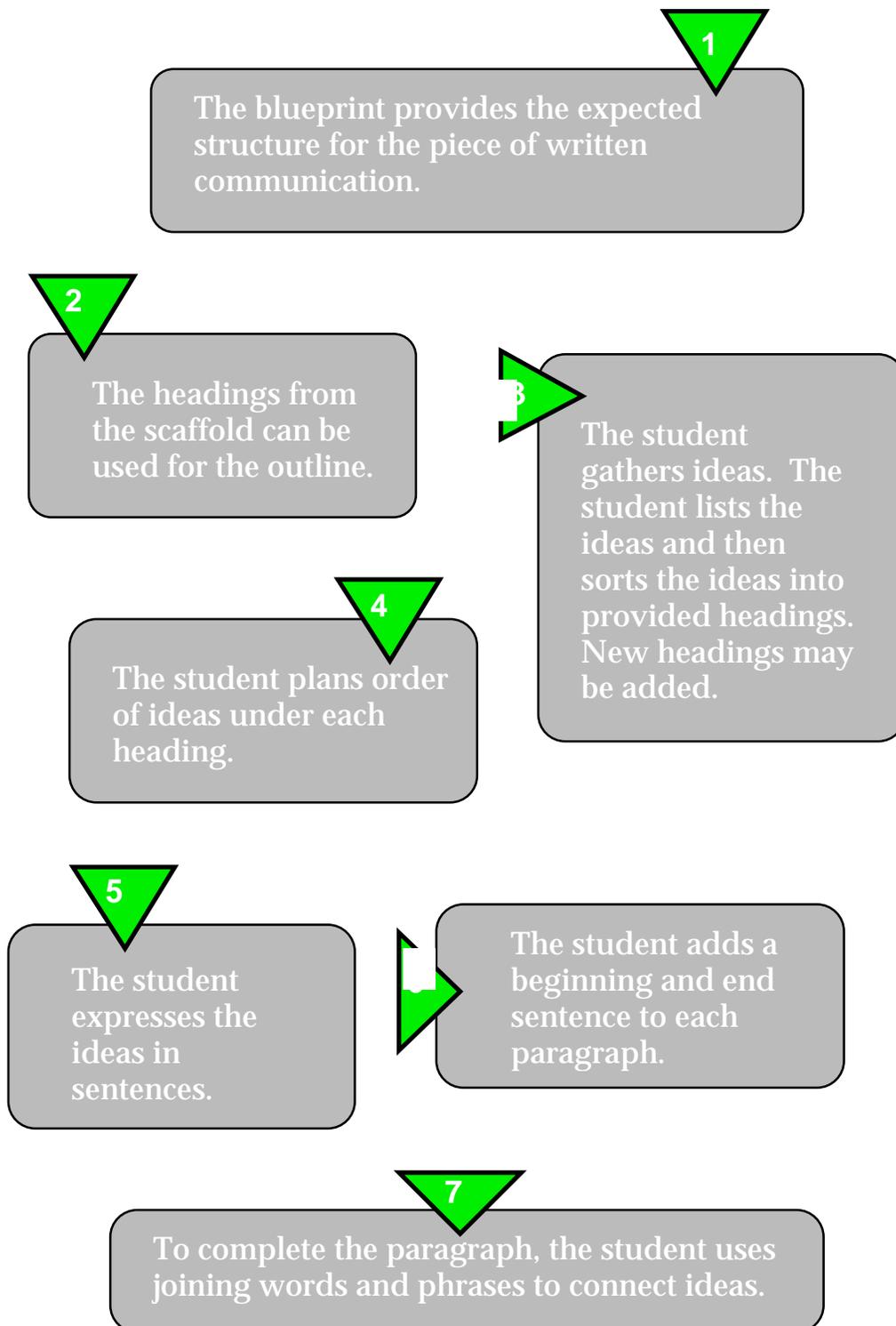
Writing Structures

The writing structures booklet entitled **<u>Blueprints for Writing</u>** is designed for use in basic writing tasks. Blueprints for Writing was developed to support students in writing assignments. This booklet was developed with the belief that writing is an act that requires direction, modelling, and scaffolding to enable writers to convey meaning to an audience. The blueprints (scaffolds) in this booklet support basic writing structures.

Many classroom situations have placed heavy emphasis on the child as the resource for the structure of their writing and have failed to address the often limited outcomes. When only the process of writing is emphasized, explicit clues are not consistently offered to provide the necessary writing blueprints to students. To work without the guidance of a framework may further exclude and discourage the student.

The most frequently expected structures of writing include reports, narratives, explanations, procedures, argumentatives, and discussions. Bereiter and Scaramalia (1987) suggest that students who do little more than knowledge-telling activities are limited in their pursuit of cognitive goals.

Process for Scaffolded Writing

1

The blueprint provides the expected structure for the piece of written communication.

2

The headings from the scaffold can be used for the outline.

3

The student gathers ideas. The student lists the ideas and then sorts the ideas into provided headings. New headings may be added.

4

The student plans order of ideas under each heading.

5

The student expresses the ideas in sentences.

The student adds a beginning and end sentence to each paragraph.

7

To complete the paragraph, the student uses joining words and phrases to connect ideas.

3

Writing Structures

_____   My writing has a clear purpose and makes a point.

_____   The way I started my writing is effective; it would make the reader

               want to keep reading.

_____   It's easy to understand what I'm talking about.

_____   I use joining and transition words.

_____   The way I ended my writing is effective. It sums up the topic.

_____   I've proofread my writing and corrected spelling, grammar, and

               punctuation.

BLUEPRINTS Journal WRITING

A journal is a narrative piece of writing in which the writer tells their thoughts about the events in their lives.

Blueprint for a Journal

Sentence 1 - Write about how you feel today.

Sentence 2 - Tell why you feel this way.

Sentence 3 - Tell about something you did yesterday.

Sentence 4 and 5 - Write two more sentences if you wish, to add details about what you did yesterday.

Sentence 6 - Telling about something you plan to do today.

Sentence 7 - Write more sentences to add details about your plans for today.

The report on an animal contains descriptive and expository writing. The descriptive paragraphs describe the physical appearance of the animal. The expository paragraphs relate facts about the animal.

Blueprint for a Report on an Animal

Paragraph 1   Physical description of the animal

In paragraph form, describe the physical appearance of the animal.

Paragraph 2   Life Cycle of the animal

In paragraph form, state the facts about the animal's typical life cycle. This paragraph would include information about the length of gestation, size at birth, size of average adult, and average life expectancy.

Paragraph 3   Habitat

In paragraph form, state the facts about where the animal lives.

Paragraph 4   Food

In paragraph form, state the facts about the food that the animal eats. Also tell facts about how the animal gathers his food.

Paragraph 5   Enemies

In paragraph form, state the facts about the animal's enemies. Also tell about the animals that are by this animal.

Blueprint for a Book Report

Sentence 1   -   Write the name of the book.

The title of the book I read was...

Sentence 2   -   Write the name of the author of the book.

The author of the book is ...

Sentence 3   -   Tell the date the book was published.

This book was published in ... by ... publishing company.

Sentence 4   -   State the main character(s) of the book.

The main characters in this book were ... and ....

Sentence 5   -   Tell where the story took place. This is called the setting.

This story took place in ..., ...

Sentences 6, 7, and 8   -   Tell what the story is mainly about.

In this story, ...and.....

Sentences 9, 10, and 11   -   Tell about the part you thought was the best part of the story.

I think the best part of the story was when ....

Sentence 12   -   If someone you knew were to ask about this story, what would

you want to tell them? Explain this in one or two sentences.

Blueprint for a response to a novel

Sentence 1	-	Write the name of the book.
		The title of the book I read was...
Sentence 2	-	Write the name of the author of the book.
		The author of the book is ...
Sentence 3	-	Tell the date the book was published.
		This book was published in ... by ... publishing company.
Sentence 4, 5, 6	-	Tell about what takes place in the novel.
Sentence 7	-	Enter your thoughts and feelings about the story.
Sentence 8	-	Tell about the part of the novel that you enjoyed most.
Sentence 9	-	Ask any questions about the novel.
Sentence 10,11	-	Tell about something from the novel that what you wish would have happened differently or not at all. Explain why.
Sentence 12, 13, 14	-	Use personal experiences to compare and think about what the characters are going through in the novel.
Activity		Write a letter to one of the characters in the novel.

Example of a Compare and Contrast Assignment:

Compare and contrast the following:

1. any two places (e.g. to eat, to travel, to shop, etc.) **or**

2. any two people (two rock stars. two families, two characters from a novel **or**

3. any two sides of a controversial issue(capital punishment, driving age)

Blueprint for a Compare and Contrast Essay

Introduction (Paragraph 1)
> Introduce what you are going to compare and contrast.
> > In this report, I ....

Body   (Paragraph 2)
> In paragraph form give specific examples of the **differences** of the two (e.g. physically, emotionally, purpose in life, etc.)

> **(Paragraph 3)**
> In paragraph form give specific examples of the **similarities** of the two (e.g. physically, emotionally, purpose in life, etc.)

Ending (Paragraph 4)
> Write a closing paragraph stating your decision as to whether the two are more alike or more unlike.

> After comparing the two, I have decided (alike?). Give three reasons. **OR**
> In summary, I have decided ...Give three reasons.

Include original ideas in your writing along with the outline!

BLUEPRINTS WRITING

Argument (Thesis)

Questions to consider:

Is the writer's thesis statement clear? Are the supporting details convincing? Does the writer show a good understanding of the topic?

Example: Thesis Assignment

Assignment: Read three articles and respond in persuasive writing.

Question to be answered: Is DNA testing a useful tool for society?

Blueprint for a Thesis response

Introduction

Paragraph 1

> **Sentence 1**   **Thesis statement** - write one sentence stating your point of view . This will be your main viewpoint on this topic gathered from reading the articles. This statement suggests how you will organize the rest to back up this point of view. **Never use the word "I".** (Example, write: DNA testing is not a useful tool for society   **NOT** I think DNA testing is a useful tool for society.)

Body of the Essay

Paragraph 2

> **Sentence 1**   - Introduce one point about the essay topic. This will be the topic sentence of the first paragraph.
>
> **Sentence 2, 3,(4)**   - Support the point made in sentence one of this paragraph and provide supporting details. Include examples.
>
> **Concluding sentence** - Write a concluding sentence for this point.

Paragraph 3

      Sentence 1   - Introduce a second point about the essay topic. This will be the topic sentence of the second paragraph.

      Sentence 2, 3, (4)   **-** Support the point made in sentence one of this paragraph and provide supporting details. Include examples.

      Concluding sentence - Write a concluding sentence for this point.

Paragraph 4

      Sentence 1   - Introduce a third point about your topic. This will be the topic sentence of the third paragraph.

      Sentence 2, 3, (4)   - Support the point made in sentence one of this paragraph and provide supporting details. Include examples.

      Concluding sentence - Write a concluding sentence for this point.

Conclusion

Paragraph 5

      Sentence 1   - Restate thesis (same as introductory paragraph).

      Concluding sentence(s) - Write an interesting finish to your essay . Write a question about the future **or** an opinion about what you have learned about the topic.