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Five Steps to Teach Simple Sentence Writing to Students With Learning Disabilities

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Abstract

Many students with learning disabilities struggle with sentence writing fluency, the skill of quickly and accurately generating words that follow rules of semantics, spelling, syntax, and usage within sentence structures understandable to readers. Students who struggle with sentence writing fluency may face difficulty fully expressing their ideas while engaging in academic writing. In the present article, we describe how a combination of explicit instruction and fluency practice can improve the simple sentence writing fluency of students with learning disabilities. We detail how five design and delivery steps can help to create a supplemental writing intervention that addresses simple sentence structure, syntax, and usage.

As a hypothetical vignette, Ms. Abou-Samra is a middle school special education teacher who works with students with learning disabilities (LD) in a resource room. Recently, she looked at the writing progress monitoring data for her students. All her students have improved in several closely related literacy skills of handwriting, spelling, and reading; however, some students have continued to struggle with writing fluency. On timed curriculum-based measurement (CBM) writing tasks, these students tend to write incomplete sentences with multiple errors in sentence structure, syntax (e.g., subject-verb agreement), and usage (e.g., capitalization). Ms. Abou-Samra decides to investigate ways to address these sentence writing issues for some of her students.

Sentence writing fluency refers to automaticity and efficiency composing multiple words that follow rules of semantics, spelling, syntax, and usage within sentence structures understandable to readers (e.g., simple, compound, and complex sentences). Students are expected to develop sentence writing fluency by the end of the elementary grades

as the focus of academic standards shift to more complicated aspects of writing, such as extended composition of different genres (National Governors Association & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Unfortunately, students with LD may struggle with dysfluent sentence writing during middle and high school and experience specific difficulties with sentence structure, length or output, syntax, and usage that negatively impacts their academic success (Graham et al. 2017).

> "A combination of explicit instruction and fluency practice may improve the simple sentence writing fluency of students.

Improving the sentence writing fluency of students with LD following the elementary grades is a priority. As the multiple skills associated with sentence writing fluency are developed (e.g., sentence structure and grammar/usage), they are stored in long-term memory, thereby freeing up memory resources (e.g., working and short-term memory) to attend to other aspects of writing (Graham, 2018). Lack of sentence writing fluency can hinder overall writing development and academic success. Sentence writing fluency is related to high-quality extended composition (Troia et al., 2019), and it is needed to complete brief writing tasks used to extend and to assess understanding across content areas (Ray et al., 2016). Importantly, simple sentences are the basis of all other sentence structures (e.g., a compound sentence has at least two simple sentences). Improving simple sentence writing fluency sets the stage for learning how to write more complicated sentences. Furthermore, other writing skills can be efficiently addressed when learning how to write simple sentences, including semantics (i.e., meaning of words and phrases), syntax (e.g., subject-verb agreement), and usage (e.g., capitalization and punctuation).

Explicit Instruction and Fluency Practice

A combination of explicit instruction and fluency practice may improve the simple sentence writing fluency of students with LD. Broadly speaking, explicit instruction refers to an iterative process of designing and delivering instruction (Archer & Hughes, 2011) that includes (a) controlling for task difficulty, (b) use of unambiguous language, (c) frequent opportunities for students to respond, and (d) instructor support through modeling, leading guided practice, and testing for independent performance. Fluency practice is delivered following explicit instruction, and it involves timed practice of a targeted skill, goal setting, performance feedback, error correction, and praise for effort and/or performance increases (Datchuk & Hier, 2019). In prior studies (Datchuk et al., 2020), this instructional approach has been successfully used to teach certain aspects of simple sentence writing: sentence structure, syntax, and usage.

Because this instructional approach has typically been used to teach only certain aspects of simple sentence writing, it is likely best suited for students who already have some foundational literacy skills but who still commit common errors in sentence writing (see Figure 1 for examples). In prior studies (e.g., Datchuk et al., 2015; Walker et al., 2007), participants have included upper elementary to high school age students who

could handwrite alphabet letters, spell high-frequency words (e.g., “had,” “was,” “the”), and read simple sentences. A recent meta-analysis (Datchuk et al., 2020) noted students meeting this criteria have benefited from a combination of explicit instruction and fluency practice in simple sentence writing, increasing their number of simple sentences and correct writing sequences (CWS) on timed writing measures, such as CBM writing tasks. The number of CWS is a metric used to summarize student writing that accounts for multiple aspects of sentence writing accuracy and fluency (Wagner et al., 2019): A CWS is awarded each time a sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with an appropriate punctuation mark. In addition, a CWS is awarded for each adjacent pair of words and punctuation marks that feature correct grammar, semantics, spelling, and usage. See Figure 2 for example sentences and CWS scores.

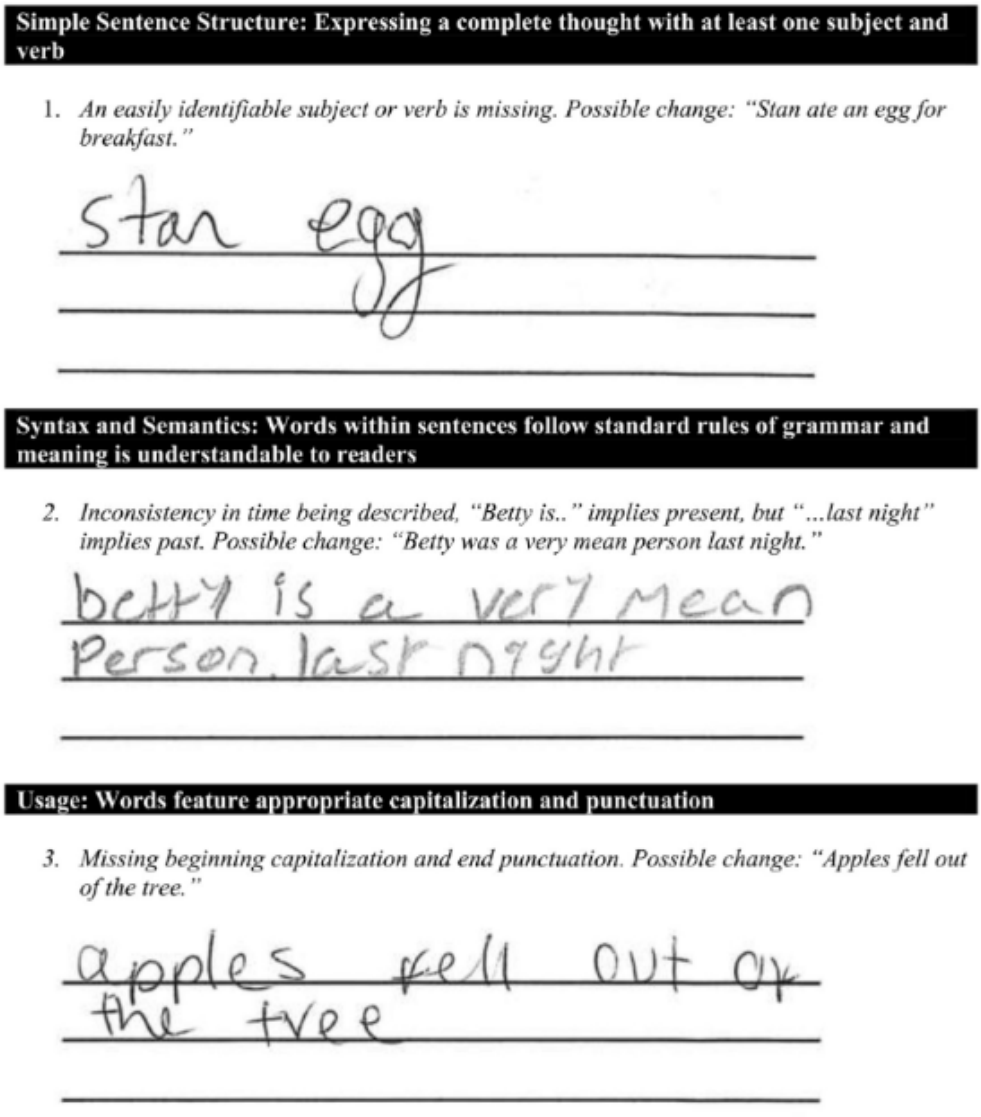

Figure 1 Aspects of simple sentence writing and description of possible errors

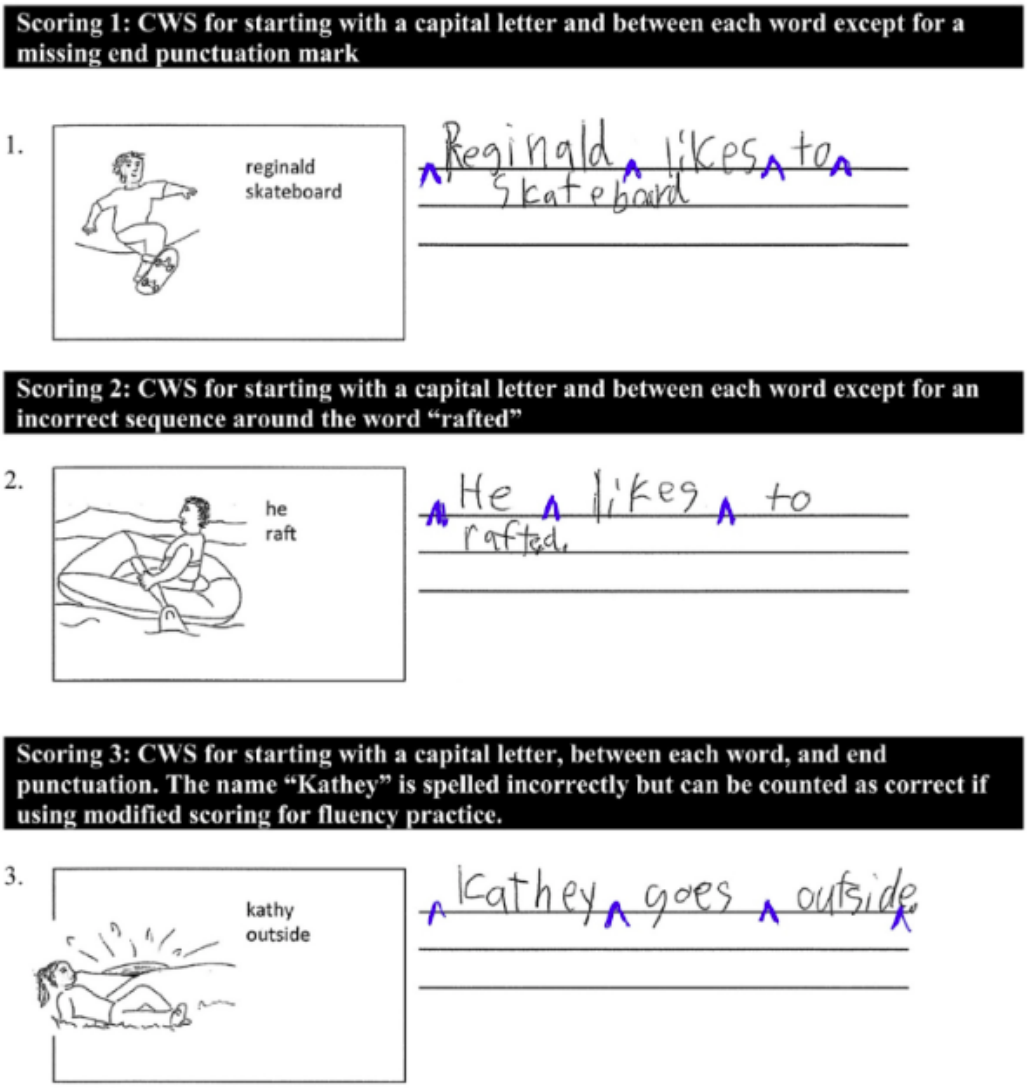

Figure 2 Example picture-word prompts scored for modified correct writing sequences (CWS)

Given the potential benefits of explicit instruction and fluency practice to improve the simple sentence writing fluency of students with LD, we present five evidence-based steps to assist in designing and delivering it as a supplemental intervention. The first three steps detail how to design the intervention: (1) Segment sentence writing into small instructional units, (2) prepare complementary instructional scripts, and (3) select strategies for active student responding. The final two steps detail how to deliver the intervention: (4) Use a model-lead-test framework, and (5) implement a structured practice routine for fluency.

Step 1: Segment Sentence Writing Into Small Instructional Units

Segmenting is controlling for task difficulty by separating new skills into smaller, less complex instructional formats and units (Archer & Hughes, 2011). To segment simple sentence writing, prior studies have used three common instructional formats: identify,

complete, and generate (Datchuk et al., 2020; White et al., 2014). Figure 3 shows examples of each format. First, students identify examples and nonexamples. Second, they complete fill-in-the-blank exercises to complete model sentences. Third, students generate their own sentences in response to picture-word prompts. Within the three different formats, picture-word prompts play a prominent role. Picture-word prompts range from basic, single-panel images that depict an individual (e.g., person, animal, or object) engaged in an action to multiple-panel images that depict a series of actions (e.g., a baker mixing ingredients, cooking, and eating). Picture-word prompts reduce some of the task demands associated with sentence writing (e.g., idea generation and spelling) that can be addressed at a later time.

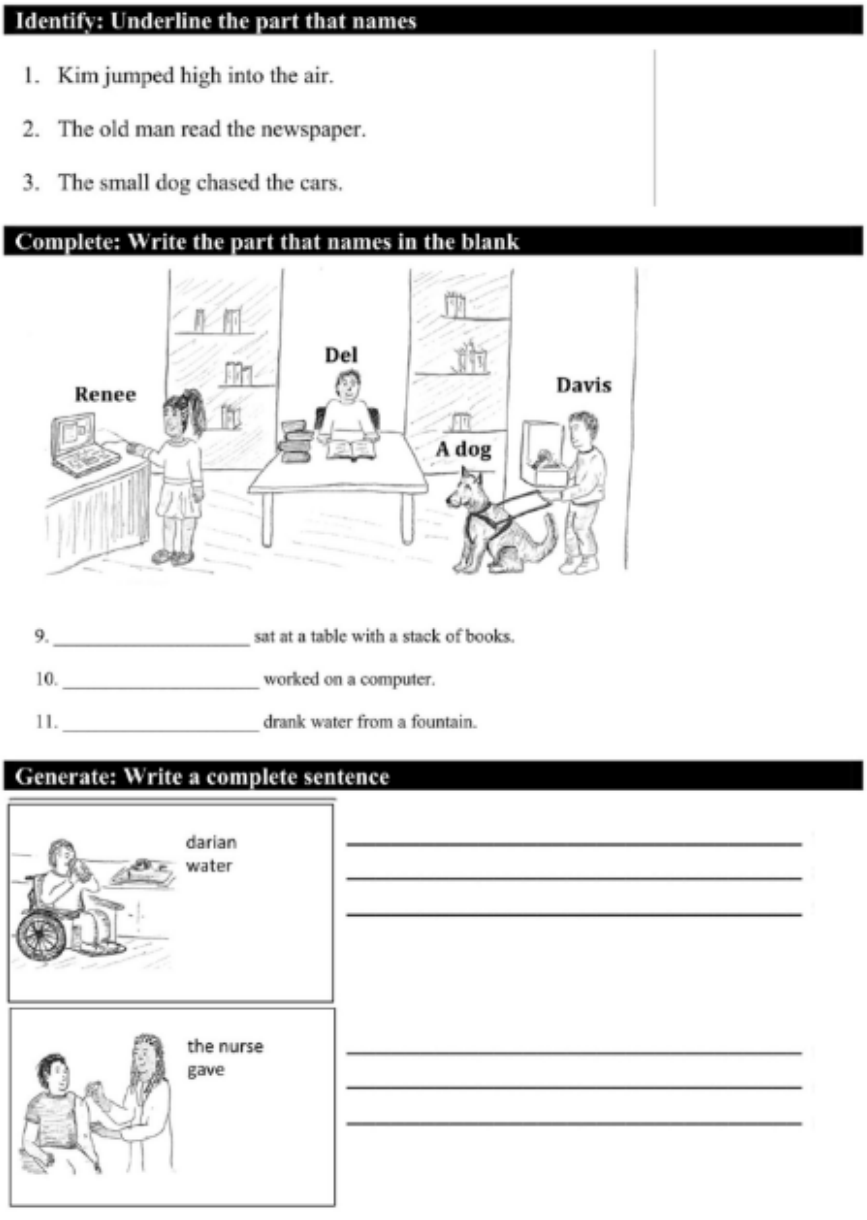

Figure 3 Example of instructional formats to teach simple sentence writing

Table 1 shows how these three instructional formats (i.e., identify, complete, and generate) are used within a scope and sequence of instructional units to teach simple sentence writing fluency. Spread the instructional units across several brief lessons to provide students with ample opportunity to practice the new content. For example, in prior studies (e.g., Datchuk, 2017), four different instructional units were covered in a single lesson: (a) Identify capital letters to start sentences and end punctuation, (b) complete fill-in-the-blank items with the part that names someone or something, (c) complete fill-in-the-blank items with the part that tells more, and (d) generate simple sentences to picture-word prompts. Depending on student skill level, instructional units on simple sentence writing can be paired with other, more complicated instructional units, such as paragraph composition (e.g., White et al., 2014).

Table 1 **Simple Sentence Writing: Instructional Units and Example Instructional Language**

No.	*Instructional units and example instructional language*
1	**Identify:** Capital letter at beginning of sentences and punctuation mark at end. "A complete, simple sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark. Underline the capital letter at the start and the punctuation mark at the end."
2	**Complete:** Edit sentence to start with a capital letter and end with punctuation mark. "A complete, simple sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark. Is the sentence missing a capital at the start or punctuation mark at the end? Fix it."
3	**Identify:** Underline/circle the two parts of a simple sentence: (1) a part that names someone or something and (2) a part that tells more about the person or thing. "A complete, simple sentence has two parts: a part that names someone or something and a part that tells more about the person or thing. Read the sentence. What part names someone or something? Underline it."
4	**Complete:** Fill in the missing part (part that names or part that tells more) of simple sentences that correspond to picture-word prompts. "A complete simple sentence has two parts: a part that names someone or something and a part that tells more about the person or thing. Here is the part that tells more. Look at the picture and write the part that names."
5	**Identify:** Underline or circle complete or incomplete simple sentences. "A complete simple sentence has two parts: a part that names and a part that tells more. Read the sentence. Is it complete or incomplete?"
6	**Generate:** Write simple sentences to picture-word prompts; the part that tells more needs to describe the main thing depicted in the picture. "A complete simple sentence starts with a capital letter, ends with a punctuation mark, has a part that names someone or something, and has a part that tells more about the person or thing. Write a complete simple sentence for each picture."

After segmenting skills, locate materials that specifically align to each instructional unit. Two possible options for materials include using existing classroom resources or adopting a stand-alone, commercially available curriculum. If using existing classroom resources, a good starting point is to copy text and pictures from existing curriculum (i.e., physical or electronic textbooks) or online applications (e.g., Google Slides) available to your school. When locating text and pictures, consider student background knowledge. Specifically, students should be able to independently read and easily identify objects in the selected text and pictures. If the text proves too difficult (e.g.,

students cannot decode or understand the words) or pictures too ambiguous (e.g., no easily identifiable action), then students may have difficultly using the materials. For example, if students learned about animal life in a recent science unit, then select words students read in the unit texts and pictures of related concepts. Creating your own materials takes time, but it has the added benefit of engaging students in content that is important to your overall curriculum or school content.

A more efficient alternative to gathering a variety of classroom materials is to use a stand-alone curriculum. There are at least two research-based curricula that use an explicit instruction approach to teach simple sentence writing: Expressive Writing (Engelmann & Silbert, 2005) and sentence instruction and frequency building to a performance criterion (SI and FBPC; Datchuk, 2017). The first, Expressive Writing, is available to purchase through McGraw Hill (www.mheducation.com), and the second, SI and FBPC, is available as a free PDF download online (https://osf.io/8u6bn). Both curricula feature the three common instructional formats (i.e., identify, complete, and generate) and use picture-word prompts as shown in Figures 2 and 3. The Expressive Writing curriculum (i.e., Expressive Writing I and Expressive Writing II) has a larger scope (i.e., 50 to 100, 50-minute lessons), and it covers simple sentences as an initial starting point prior to addressing more advanced skills, such as story and essay writing. Conversely, the SI and FBPC curriculum has a smaller scope (i.e., three to six, 25-minute lessons followed by 10 to 15, 10-minute lessons), and it specifically addresses simple sentence writing fluency. In addition to materials for explicit instruction, the SI and FBPC curriculum has materials needed for fluency practice.

Ms. Abou-Samra prepares materials to teach simple sentence writing with explicit instruction and fluency practice. She downloads and prints commercially available materials for the SI and FBPC curriculum from https://osf.io/8u6bn. In addition, she decides to develop some of her own picture-word prompts. To do this, she uses her phone to take pictures of images used in the students' content area classes. For example, the students have been studying ancient Egypt in their social studies class, so she takes pictures of images from the class materials (e.g., a picture of papyrus growing by a body of water with the words "papyrus" and "grows") and creates picture-word prompts by pasting the pictures into Word documents and printing them on paper.

Step 2: Prepare Complementary Instructional Scripts

Explicit instruction relies on direct, unambiguous communication between teachers and students. A key feature of explicit instruction is preparing and using an instructional script that highlights big ideas of a lesson in clear, consistent, and concise language (Archer & Hughes, 2011). In prior studies, researchers developed instructional scripts that highlight a unique way to define simple sentences as a rule (e.g., Datchuk, 2017). Specifically, complete simple sentences start with a capital letter, end with a punctuation mark, and contain two main parts: (a) a part that names someone or something and (b) a part that tells more. For example, the sentence, "Jaheem ate some chicken soup." has

two parts: a part that names (i.e., Jaheem) and a part that tells more (i.e., ate some chicken soup.).

> “Explicit instruction relies on direct, unambiguous communication between teachers and students.

Essential parts of the rule stay the same (i.e., parts that name and tell more, a capital letter to start, and punctuation mark to end), but words or content can vary across sentences. For example, similar to “Jaheem ate some chicken soup.” the sentence “Oi Ling cooked pho for lunch.” follows the same rule but with different words or content. Defining simple sentences in such a manner contrasts with traditional definitions of simple sentences as containing parts of speech (e.g., at least one subject and verb or at least one noun and predicate).

> “Defining simple sentences as having two parts— one part that names and one part that tells more— may improve efficiency and generalization.

Although unconventional, defining simple sentences as having two parts—one part that names and one part that tells more—may improve efficiency and generalization. For efficiency, instruction can begin immediately without first having to teach parts of speech (e.g., nouns refer to a person, place, thing, or idea). For generalization, similar language can be used to define closely related writing skills. For example, one previous study (Walker et al., 2007) used it to teach other closely related writing skills, such as rules of grammar (e.g., he, she, or they can be used to name someone), usage (e.g., capital letter for the part that names), and sentence structure (e.g., complex sentences have an additional part that tells why or when).

For your instructional scripts, create a document (e.g., electronic or paper-based) that can be easily referenced during instruction. At a minimum, your script should include a definition of simple sentences and provide specific, concise directions for how students should complete each instructional unit. Table 1 shows example instructional language for each instruction unit from Step 1. In addition to creating your own script, the aforementioned curricula, Expressive Writing (Engelmann & Silbert, 2005) and SI and FBPC (Datchuk, 2017), have accompanying instructional scripts that use the unique definition of simple sentences (i.e., a part that names and a part that tells more). Regardless of how your script is ultimately created, it is important to practice delivering the script prior to instruction to increase comfortability and pacing.

Ms. Abou-Samara closely reviews her list of simple sentence writing activities segmented into distinct instructional units. Then, she downloads instructional scripts from https://osf.io/8u6bn and writes scripted language to accompany picture-word prompts that highlight class content on ancient Egypt. She practices saying and performing the script aloud with another special education teacher at the school to get comfortable with the instructional language.

Step 3: Select Strategies for Active Student Responding

Another hallmark of explicit instruction is active student responding, or providing frequent opportunities for students to respond during instruction (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Prior to delivering instruction, it is important to consider the types of responses students will provide and how they will be prompted. Students can actively respond with both vocal and written responses (Datchuk et al., 2020). Having students actively respond—first vocally, then in writing—has numerous theoretical and practice benefits.

Theoretically, there is a strong connection between student vocal and written language (e.g., Graham, 2018). Having students respond in both ways leverages both language systems—vocal and written language—in learning how to write simple sentences. Practically, vocal responses provide a quick way for instructors to praise correct responses or catch potential errors prior to students writing their response. Active responding also provides practical diagnostic information that instructors can use to make within-lesson decisions regarding the need to remove or add scaffolding.

Depending on the number of students participating in each lesson, there are different strategies to prompt vocal and written responses. If intervention is delivered individually (i.e., one-on-one), then students can simply respond vocally, receive affirmative or correct feedback, and write their response. If intervention is delivered to a small group, then unison responding (i.e., all students respond at the same time) can be used as an efficient way for all students to respond vocally and in writing. There are several suggested steps for unison responding (Archer & Hughes, 2011): (a) Present an item, (b) ask a question, (c) pause for think time, and (d) signal for a student response. For example, show students an item (e.g., _____ worked on a computer), then ask a question (e.g., “Using the picture, what is the part that names for _____ worked on a computer?”). After providing some think time (e.g., a couple of seconds), provide an auditory signal (e.g., finger snap) for students to vocally respond with an answer (e.g., “Renee”). Follow student responses with affirmative or corrective feedback (e.g., “That’s right! Renee worked on a computer.”), and then have students write their response.

Unison responses are best suited for when the same response is expected from all students. As shown in Table 1, unison responses are typically used for instructional units in which students identify examples or non-examples (e.g., identify correct or incorrect use of capitalization) or complete fill-in-the-blank items (e.g., insert missing part that names or tells more corresponding to a picture-word prompt). Conversely, unison responding may not be appropriate when different responses are expected from students, such as instructional units in which students generate their own sentence to picture-word prompts. Different response strategies can be used within a lesson. In prior studies (e.g., Datchuk, 2017), unison responses were typically followed by individual student responses to verify independence and understanding.

To select appropriate response strategies, consider the number of students participating in each lesson and the type of instructional unit (i.e., identify, complete, or generate). Assign specific strategies, individual and/or unison, to elicit vocal and written student

responses. Prior to instruction, it may prove beneficial to first practice with students on how to respond in unison, especially if it is novel or relatively new to students.

Ms. Abou-Samra reviews her instructional script and assigns specific student responses throughout. Because she plans to deliver instruction to a small group of students, Ms. Abou-Samara decides to use a mix of unison and individual responses for instructional formats in which students identify or complete items. Prior to starting formal instruction, Ms. Abou-Samra practices unison responding with her small group of students to ensure upcoming lessons proceed smoothly. She presents an item (e.g., the word "newspaper"), asks a question (e.g., "What is this word?"), pauses for think time, and snaps her finger as a signal. Then students vocally respond and write their response.

Step 4: Use a Model-Lead-Test Framework

Explicit instruction is an iterative process in which teachers model new content, lead students through guided practice, then test for independent performance (Archer & Hughes, 2011). In prior studies, the larger skill of how to write complete simple sentences was taught after each smaller skill or instructional unit was taught with model-lead-test steps (e.g., Datchuk, 2017). For example, teachers used model-lead-test steps to teach students how to identify the parts of a simple sentence (i.e., underline part that names someone/something): Teachers modeled underlining parts of sentences that named someone/something, led students through guided practice by providing affirmative feedback for correct responses and corrective feedback for errors, and tested for independent performance. Figure 4 shows the iterative process of selecting an instructional unit and then engaging in model-lead-test steps.

For modeling, provide examples and nonexamples of performing the selected writing task (i.e., identify, complete, and generate). Examples have all essential attributes (e.g., all parts of a complete, simple sentence), and nonexamples are missing at least one essential attribute (e.g., a simple sentence missing beginning capitalization and/or end punctuation). During modeling, use a combination of vocal and written language. Vocal models highlight the clear, concise, and consistent language used to define simple sentence writing and help students contextualize the written models (e.g., "This sentence is missing a part that names"). Written models involve engaging in a successful display of the skill, such as underlining the part that names within a variety of sentences or completing fill-in-the-blank items with the missing part that tells more.

For the lead step, provide students with frequent opportunities to perform the sentence writing task that is part of the targeted instructional approach. Following each student response, provide affirmative feedback to reinforce correct responses and error correction to address misunderstandings. For example, if students say or write a grammatically incorrect word (e.g., Tahani eated the sandwich), then model the correct response (e.g., Tahani ate the sandwich) and have students repeat it before moving forward. Based on student performance, make within-lesson decisions on the need for additional scaffolding. If students display inaccurate performance, then increase the

level of scaffolding (i.e., model correct responses) to clarify misunderstandings. If students display accurate performance, then decrease the level of scaffolding and proceed to the test step.

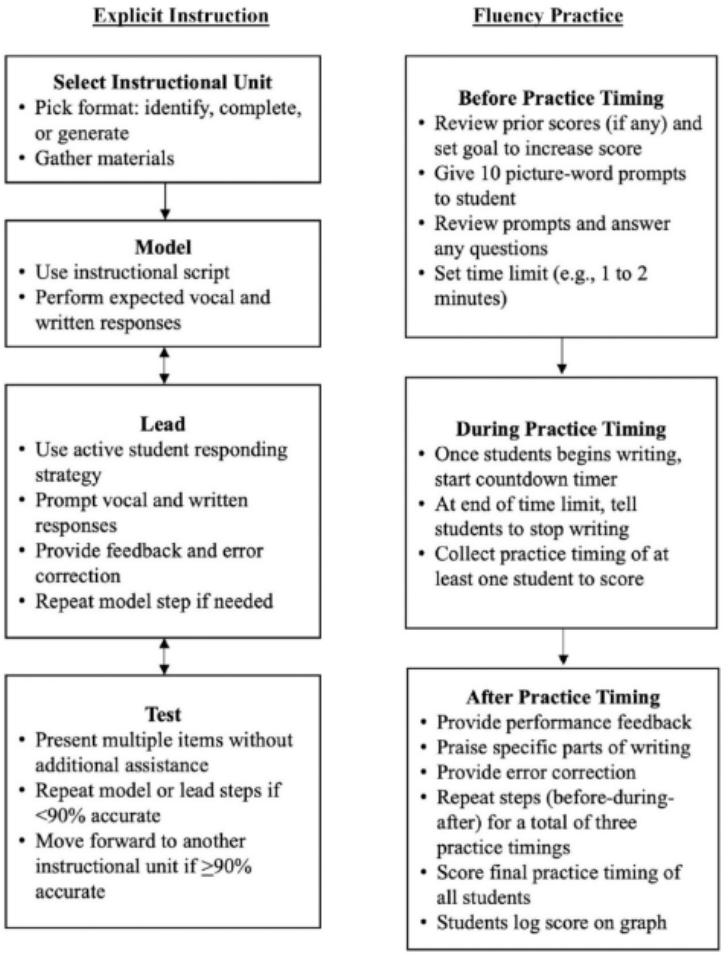

Figure 4 Delivering explicit instruction and fluency practice: implementation guide for simple sentence writing

For the test step, have students complete multiple items independently (e.g., five fill-in-the-blank items by writing in the missing part of a sentence). After students finish the items, use student responses as a diagnostic to make between-lesson adjustments to the delivery or design of instruction. Specifically, if students show inaccurate performance on the test step (i.e., <90% accuracy completing the instructional formats independently), then it may be necessary to reteach part(s) of the lesson or to provide targeted instruction on a missing preskill (e.g., additional instruction on upper case letters for capitalization rules). If student responses are accurate (≥90% accuracy), then proceed to the next series of instructional units (see Table 1).

Ms. Abou-Samra deliverers explicit instruction on simple sentence writing. Each lesson lasts approximately 25 minutes, and instruction occurs across 6 days. For each

instructional format (i.e., identify, complete, and generate), Ms. Abou-Samra models how to perform the appropriate writing task with vocal and written language. Next, she leads student practice with the targeted format, providing feedback and error correction as needed and adjusting the level of scaffolding in response to student performance. In the last step for each format, Ms. Abou-Samra tests students' acquisition by providing them independent practice opportunities and using their responses to determine next steps for instruction.

Step 5: Implement a Structured Practice Routine for Fluency

As a result of following the preceding steps (i.e., Steps 1–4), students may show increased accuracy in their simple sentence writing. Specifically, after all of the instructional units (see Table 1) have been explicitly taught, students may show approximately 90% accuracy writing simple sentences that (a) start with a capital letter, (b) have a part that names someone or something, (c) have a part that tells more, and (d) end with a punctuation mark. Students may still need explicit instruction on additional aspects of sentence writing, such as spelling and/or rules of grammar (e.g., subject-verb agreement), but sentences should follow those key dimensions.

To further help students commit the structure of simple sentences to memory, additional practice that emphasizes speed and accuracy may be necessary. In some prior studies (Datchuk et al., 2020), fluency practice was delivered following explicit instruction. Fluency practice entails a routine of daily or every other day practice, typically comprised of several components: timed practice, performance feedback, error correction, and praise (Datchuk & Hier, 2019). Figure 4 provides an overview of how to structure fluency practice sessions for simple sentence writing. In prior studies, fluency practice has been used to help students practice writing complete simple sentences to a series of picture-word prompts (e.g., Datchuk et al., 2015). Picture-word prompts provide a focal point for practice—students can quickly engage in writing. For examples of picture-word prompts, see Figures 2 and 3.

To begin fluency practice, provide students with a series of picture-word prompts—typically 10 picture-word prompts, more than can be completed within the time limit (Datchuk, 2020). Encourage students to look at the picture-word prompts and to ask clarifying questions if needed. For example, students might ask for help identifying one of the words or an object in the picture. Then, tell students to write as many complete sentences as possible within the time limit (e.g., 1–2 minutes). Students complete multiple practice timings each session (e.g., three, 1-minute practice timings). Importantly, the same picture-word prompts are used for the entire session (e.g., three, 1-minute practice timings on Monday of Set A), but then a new set of prompts is used for the next session (e.g., three, 1-minute practice timings on Tuesday of Set B).

> "Picture-word prompts provide a focal point for practice—students can quickly engage in writing.

At the end of each practice timing, score student responses for the number of CWS. As previously mentioned, a CWS is awarded (a) if a sentence starts with a capital letter, (b) if a sentence ends with an appropriate punctuation mark, and (c) between each adjacent pair of words and punctuation marks that feature correct grammar, semantics, spelling, and usage (Wagner et al., 2019). In prior studies, modified scoring rules were used for CWS (Datchuk et al., 2020); specifically, words that were misspelled but phonologically similar (i.e., sounds the same but spelled incorrectly) to the intended words (e.g., roled instead of rolled) were scored as correct. This modification may encourage students to use a more diverse range of words when writing. This modification is intended for fluency practice, and it is not intended for writing tasks traditionally used for progress monitoring or screening (Wagner et al., 2019). Figure 2 shows examples of student responses scored for CWS.

At the end of each practice timing, provide performance feedback by stating the total number of CWS and provide positive, specific praise in relation to the parts of a complete sentence (e.g., “Great job remembering a part that names someone or something”). For each error, provide error correction by modeling correct responses and having students repeat the correct response. For example, teachers could model how to use a word appropriately (e.g., see Figure 2: He rode in a raft). At the end of each fluency practice session, students log their best performance (i.e., highest CWS) on a table or graph. At the start of subsequent fluency practice sessions, encourage students to beat their previous best performance.

If delivering fluency practice one-on-one with a student, then performance feedback, error correction, and praise can happen immediately (i.e., provide these components at the end of each timing). If delivering fluency practice to a small group, then these components can be delayed. For instance, in a prior study (Datchuk, 2017), teachers randomly selected a fluency practice sheet to score in front of a small group and encouraged students to compare their responses to the one shown. Then, teachers collected the final fluency practice sheet from all students (e.g., Practice Timing 3) and provided performance feedback (i.e., number of CWS on Practice Timing 3) at the beginning of the next session.

All three of Ms. Abou-Samra’s students successfully complete the explicit instruction lessons and show at least 90% accuracy writing complete simple sentences that start with a capital letter, end with a punctuation mark, have a part that names someone or something, and a have part that tells more. Consequently, Ms. Abou-Samra determines that her students are ready for fluency practice. In a small group, she provides each student with a set of 10 picture-word prompts and asks them to respond to as many of the prompts as possible within 1 minute. The students complete three, 1-minute timings with the same set of picture-word prompts. At the end of each timing, Ms. Abou-Samra randomly selects one of the student’s fluency practice sheets and displays it for the small group with a document camera and projector. She scores the student’s responses for CWS, explains her reasoning for the scoring, and answers any student questions.

During her planning period later that day, Ms. Abou-Samra scores the last timing completed by all students. At the beginning of the fluency practice session on the following day, she hands the scored practice sheets back to the students and provides performance feedback, praise, and error correction to each student.

Implementation and Variations

To see improvement in students' simple sentence writing, schedule dedicated time for supplemental instruction and practice. Prior studies have found simple sentence writing can improve in as little as a few weeks: three to six explicit instruction lessons of 25 minutes each, followed by 10 to 15 fluency practice lessons of 10 minutes each (Datchuk et al., 2020). Greater amounts of time will be needed to address writing skills besides sentence writing. For instance, prior studies that addressed additional aspects of writing (e.g., topic sentences to a paragraph) have lasted approximately 50 minutes each lesson without additional fluency practice (White et al., 2014)

Closely monitor student performance during intervention. Aspects of instruction and practice may need to be altered to better support students. For example, the time limit for practice timings may have to increase (e.g., instead of 1-minute timings, use 2-minute timings) to account for student handwriting speed (Datchuk & Dembek, 2018). Furthermore, the intervention only addresses specific aspects of sentence writing. Instruction in additional aspects of writing, such as more complicated sentence structures or extended composition, may need to occur to see more pronounced improvement in student writing (White et al., 2014).

Conclusion

Many students with LD struggle with aspects of sentence writing, including sentence structure, syntax, and usage (Graham et al., 2017). In the present article, we detail five steps teachers can take to design and deliver a supplemental intervention that addresses simple sentence writing fluency. As a result of a combination of explicit instruction and fluency practice, teachers may notice an increase in the number of complete simple sentences written by students and the number of CWS on timed CBM writing tasks.

As a result of a combination of explicit instruction and fluency practice in simple sentence writing, Ms. Abou-Samra notices an improvement in her students' writing. Specifically, her students write complete sentences on a more consistent basis and have shown gradual improvement in their number of CWS on timed CBM writing tasks. She is excited to build on her students' writing growth and plans to expand instruction to include additional writing skills, such as compound sentence structures and extended compositions.

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