STRUGGLING WRITERS’ USE OF IPAD ART AND TEXT APPS FOR STORY WRITING

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ABSTRACT
Many children struggle with writing. Idea generation, planning, organizing ideas, editing, and encoding a final text all have a part in a child’s producing a publishable copy. Part of the challenge for these students is how working memory can be overloaded when initially planning and writing at the same time. To address this issue, the author offered eight struggling writers the opportunity to employ a mnemonic strategy entitled STORY, which included verbalizing story ideas while noting them in an illustration with an iPad art app and then later keyboarding the text. The students received intervention programming over 24 sessions, 45 minutes each. All students demonstrated improvement with story content and quality. Two of the lowest-performing students participated in an additional 24 sessions to promote improvement.

INTRODUCTION
Many children can experience difficulties with writing—even more so for children from diverse backgrounds. In this project, the author employed action research methods to analyze how eight struggling writers’ ability changed after learning the STORY mnemonic strategy 1:1 with one of two intervention teachers, recent education program graduates (Erickson, 1986; Hendricks, 2006; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). After the students wrote four stories using any previously-learned strategies, the children received four sessions of instruction in STORY, and then applied the mnemonic strategy in the remaining 15 intervention sessions. Two students who demonstrated little progress participated in an additional 24 intervention sessions. While some required extra intervention sessions, the children benefited from this type of process.
A survey of international statistics indicate that about 40% or more of students cannot write at a basic level of ability; Canada (Education Quality Accountability Office, 2013) and the Department for Education, UK (2012) are two examples. In the 2011 assessment results of a representative student sample across the United States (National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2011), 75% of 8th and 12th grade students scored below the proficient level of writing ability; percentages for students from low-income and non-English families were even higher. While national income does correlate to student achievement, it only accounts for 6% of the difference in average student performance across countries (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2010); the other 94% of differences can be attributed to per-student spending, poverty levels, or the portion of students in classes with an immigrant background. The growth of technology (e.g., tablet computers, writing-assistance software) in developed countries adds to the disparities between wealthy and poor nations. Policy makers and educators must work to make technology available to all students to promote their learning (International Reading Association, 2009). When paired with technology, intervention programming can offer an even more effective means to address the academic needs of these students.

The writing challenges students experience in classroom activities often stem from what writing as a process requires: the need to integrate idea generation, planning, and text production in order to produce an elaborate text. Struggling writers can benefit from the growing number and types of technology such as tablet computers. This author sought to explore the challenges that struggling writers face and how technology can support them.

**METHODS**

The purpose of the project was to investigate struggling writers’ change in story-writing ability. The processes of this study incorporated planning a change, observing and participating in the process as well as the results of the change, reviewing the processes and results, and then reinitiating the planning, acting, and reflection cycle (Erickson, 1986; Hendricks, 2006; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000). Periodically across the timeline of the study, students’ texts from author-chosen sessions were scored by external reviewers for content and quality. How students used the STORY mnemonic strategy after the training sessions prompted the action of the research. In the intervention sessions that followed, the students applied STORY. Daily, the author dialogued in person or via email with the intervention teachers about students’ progress and developed ideas for how they could improve. The author also observed about 33% of the sessions at the school site.

Clearview Elementary is a mid-sized suburban school in a diverse neighborhood of the US Pacific Northwest. With 64.2% of the 2011 student population participating in the free/reduced lunch program, the school met the 40%+ criteria for Title 1 status. The teaching personnel had chosen to apply a school-wide Title 1 model such as all teachers receive professional development and every student have access to strategy instruction. Later that year, the district informed the teachers that more stringent pre-referral criteria for possible special education would be implemented. Only after teachers had offered multiple interventions could a student be assessed and possibly placed.
According to the 2012 state tests, about 40% of Clearview's fourth-grade students were below grade level for writing ability. In fall 2013, the state also implemented the Common Core State Standards (National Governors’ Association Center for Best Practices, 2010), which indicate that cursive writing is only emphasized to the end of first grade; use of technology tools are emphasized in second grade and those that follow (Graham & Harris, 2013; National Governors’ Association, 2010). To address the needs of struggling writers and to do so with technology, this author offered eight 4th-grade students who were in the bottom 30% of their class for writing skills to receive 1:1 mnemonic-strategy instruction over 24 sessions, 45 minutes each. Participants received intervention programming in the library's media center, which was adjacent to the students' classrooms.

### Table 1

*Student Participants Descriptive Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Receiving Supplemental Services</th>
<th>Reading Level as defined by district and publisher assessments</th>
<th>General education teachers’ rating: math</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>Tabitha</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Yes: Title 1. 4 times 15 minutes = 60 minutes/week</td>
<td>End of second grade</td>
<td>Mid 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk</td>
<td>Leslie</td>
<td>Mexican/American</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>End of second grade</td>
<td>Bottom 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor</td>
<td>Leslie</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Early third grade</td>
<td>Lower 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Mid second grade</td>
<td>Lower 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicky</td>
<td>Tabitha</td>
<td>Caucasian/Latina</td>
<td>Yes: Title 1. 4 times 15 minutes = 60 minutes/week</td>
<td>End of second grade</td>
<td>Lower 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yury</td>
<td>Leslie</td>
<td>Russian (Ukrainian)</td>
<td>Yes: ELL. 4 times per week for 30 minutes = 120 minutes.</td>
<td>Mid second grade</td>
<td>Mid 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weston</td>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Mid fourth grade</td>
<td>Top 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yana</td>
<td>Tabitha</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Yes: Title 1. 4 times 15 minutes = 60 minutes/week</td>
<td>End of second grade</td>
<td>Lower 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general education teachers (Cindy, Leslie, and Tabitha) at Clearview Elementary devoted 30-60 minutes per day for writing specifically, and used resources such as *Step up to Writing* (Auman, 2002) and Calkins, Martinelli, Kessler, and Gillette’s (2006) *Units of*
Study for Teaching Writing: Grades 3-5. They agreed that additional programming would help the struggling writers from their classes who would participate in this project (see Table 1). The author asked general education teachers to rate their students as to where in the range of ability the child placed for math (see Table 1, far-right column) amongst their class overall—knowing that each student placed in the bottom 30% of writing ability. The scale’s range was: bottom 20%, lower 20%, mid 20% (benchmark/at grade level ability), upper 20%, and top 20%.

At the author’s first meeting with the teachers, they discussed typical areas where students can demonstrate difficulties with writing.

How writing can present challenges for children
To be a good writer, one needs to be a good reader as they complement each other (Parodi, 2013). Reading published authors’ works offers a child the opportunity to see and hear how elaborate prose is organized and encoded into connected text. A second challenge for struggling writers is idea generation. Struggling writers may have difficulty choosing a topic because they do not have a firm grasp of what a story could entail or how to develop it. This raises another challenge for these students: organizing ideas once they have chosen a topic. Without a clear understanding of a story’s structure, based on examples one can see in reading others’ writing, it is often difficult for struggling writers to organize their text into a beginning, middle, and end (Lassonde & Richards, 2013).

Good writers spend time planning their ideas, storyline, and text (Coker, 2013). Without having devoted time for practicing the writing process, struggling writers often spend little or no time in planning. Their writing products often are short, repetitive (e.g., I went to Boston. I went to New York. I went to Philadelphia.), lack a cohesive theme, climax, and story resolution. Spelling, syntax, and varied types of sentences are also often lacking. When encoding their ideas into text, visual-motor integration is often a challenge for struggling writers: the body’s ability to take ideas in the brain and manage arm, hand, and finger muscles to make legible text on the page. To make the process of writing more manageable, struggling writers often benefit from explicit instruction, step-by-step feedback, and the use of a keyboard to improve.

Teaching a mnemonic strategy via Self-Regulated Strategy Development
General education teachers often introduce students to a topic or method for doing a task. After the teacher’s explanation and one or two examples, students are to begin the assigned task for completion. When students persist in demonstrating difficulty, students can benefit from a more explicit instructional system. Self-regulated strategy instruction (SRSD (Graham & Harris, 2005) is a practical method for teaching students such as struggling writers to improve in story planning and composition. SRSD comprises six steps. First, the teacher reviews past written texts and assessments such as the students’ school record and writing portfolio contents. Reviewing students’ written products over time offers the teacher a means to analyze students’ learning and needs in the aim of pursuing the student’s goals and objectives (Kim & Yazdian, 2014). The teacher can then consider what
mnemonic strategy may be best to offer a student the opportunity to improve in writing as well as what aspects (e.g., planning, encoding) should be of key focus.

The second step is to discuss with the student how learning a mnemonic strategy could help. Foorman (2007) comments that students who struggle with literacy tasks (e.g., writing) need more practice, as compared to typically-achieving children, in developing their self-efficacy to manage a skill. An example for story writing is STORY (Dunn, 2014): **S**tart thinking about your story by asking Graham and Harris’ (1989) key questions such as *Who? When? Where? What happened? What happened next? How did the story end? How did the main character feel; the other characters feel? **T**hink about your answers and illustrate them on the iPad (Dunn, 2014). **O**rganize your thoughts further by verbalizing your ideas aloud and editing them as you type them. **R**evise your text to make it more elaborate with descriptive words, better syntax, and grammar. **Y**our story is now ready for you to read it to someone else, receive their feedback, and make final edits. Focusing the student’s attention on a story’s key components (e.g., characters, location, main event) and making a simple story-plan picture on an iPad art app (not having to spell and encode text in an outline) and voicing story ideas during the making of art can all help the student to have the highest amount of mental energy possible for the pre-writing stage. Vygotsky (1986) suggested the notion of talking as a tool of the mind; self-talk can help a struggling writer manage the idea-generation and story-planning process.

The third step of SRSD is to model the strategy to the student. Because struggling writers have not developed a proficient process for generating text, the teacher needs to verbalize aloud all ideas and actions that enter the brain such as, “I need to think about a topic for my story. I need to get out the WWW cue questions. I will turn on my iPad and open the Doodle Buddy (2013) art app.” etc. Vygotsky (1978) contends that children learn language through collaboration with more competent speakers. Children take a major step forward in developing their self-regulation of a type of task when they employ the strategies that teacher’s model.

Strategies are more effective if they can be applied from rote memory. Brophy (2013) comments that when teachers offer students information that they can see as valuable, interesting, and helpful to them, then the students heighten their intrinsic motivation to apply themselves such as memorizing key steps in a task’s process(es). For this purpose, the fourth SRSD step is to have the student memorize the strategy—both the acrostic and each letter’s associated phrase. In doing so, the student will more fluently apply a mnemonic strategy such as STORY.

In the fifth SRSD step, the teacher works with the student to collaboratively write more stories. With each successive story, the teacher yields more and more lead to the student so as to encourage independence in employing the strategy. Mather, Wendling, and Roberts (2009) suggest that teachers encourage students’ positive attitudes toward writing through setting realistic goals, offering feedback that is meaningful and positive, respecting the student’s perspectives and voice, not associating writing with punishment, and focusing more so on content instead of spelling and syntax. In this collaborative SRSD step, how
should the teacher define success at this stage in a student's learning? In this study, the author defined it as the students being able to answer each of the seven cue questions as well as being able to write half of the text with complete sentences. Student participants accomplished this after four training sessions.

The sixth SRSD step is generalization and maintenance. The teacher discusses with the student how a strategy like STORY could be used for other writing tasks such as personal or historical narratives. Harris, Graham, Mason, and Friedlander (2008) comment that an intervention teacher's dialoging with the student about a strategy's purpose helps clarify what appropriate uses of a mnemonic such as STORY could be. This discussion should also include how the mnemonic could be modified for other purposes. Involving others (e.g., general education teacher, parents) can further help the student to be encouraged to use a mnemonic strategy along with periodic refresher lessons.

**How does a Teacher define which Students should receive Intensive Intervention for Writing?**

Given the multifaceted nature of writing, more than one source of data should be considered (Behizadeh, 2014). A good starting point is for the teacher to review what the student has already done. Documents from the child’s school record such as past report cards and assessment data can offer insight. If the student has a portfolio from the current and/or previous years, the teacher could review the texts to determine strengths and weaknesses in writing. The teacher can interview the student about their interest and attitudes about writing (Rhodes, 1993). Based on the teachers’ review of these sources as well as a classroom-wide story writing activity that the author requested (i.e., write a story about the cartoon picture posted on the Elmo or on another topic of your choosing; you can have 10 minutes to plan and 15 minutes to write), the author requested eight participants who were in the bottom 30% of their class for story-writing ability; they agreed to participate in late September 2013.

**Components of a Daily Intervention Session**

For each daily session, a student met the intervention teacher at a corner of the library, which was adjacent to the students' general education classrooms. This offered students an independent and quiet place to receive instruction. The first five sessions consisted of baseline story writing: students composed a story (referred to as a story probe assessment) at each session using any previously-learned strategies. The students had 10 minutes to plan and 15 minutes to write. The students used the Matcha (2014) iPad app for keyboarding as it offered a provided word count as well as a saving-to-Dropbox (2014) feature. With Dropbox, the first author could access each day student’s stories and art. The purpose of baseline was to attain a current level of story writing ability. The author had two university educators serve as reviewers to score each text for content (i.e., answering the seven WWW, W=2, H=2 cue questions; Graham & Harris, 1989) and quality using an author-created 0-7 rubric based on the 6+1 Traits of Writing (Education Northwest, 2014) and Harris and Graham (1996). Students did not lose points for spelling as this is one of the most common challenges for struggling writers; the focus was more so on idea generation and story-line progression.
The next four sessions consisted of training. The intervention teachers taught the participants the STORY mnemonic strategy using SRSD’s six steps.

In the remaining 15 sessions (Intervention phase), students applied STORY. The first eight minutes were devoted to reviewing a published story. The author had previously attained each student's reading level. The librarian provided some book choices for each student, from which they could choose a text each day such as *Chicks and Salsa* (Reynolds, 2005), *Jangles a Big Fish Story* (Shannon, 2012). Typically, the intervention teacher read a few pages or the whole story, depending on the length, to the student. Sometimes the student preferred to read aloud. At different points, the student summarized the text or made predictions about what the next section(s) would entail. They then discussed the story and analyzed it for storyline, characters, plot, etc.

Over the next five minutes, the intervention teacher chose some key words from the text for the student to spell. If written incorrectly, the intervention teacher informed the student of the error and offered another attempt. This cycle continued until the student attained mastery. The intervention teacher then dialogued with the student to create two sets of simple sentences on a white-erase board about the story or an image from a picture book. They then discussed how conjunction words could be used to make compound sentences form each pair.

The last segment of each daily session was devoted to extended writing using the STORY mnemonic strategy. The intervention teachers offered feedback as students worked through the STORY process. If a student did not complete a text in a given session, the child could complete it the next day. At each session, students noted their story's word count and aimed to improve it in each consecutive text. See Table 2 for a participants’ example in using the STORY mnemonic strategy.

To assess students’ change in story-writing ability over time, they independently completed a story probe assessment in the first and every third session thereafter of the Intervention phase.
Table 2
Kirk’s Spoken and Written Stories with Illustrated Story Plan (Intervention session 14, November 26, 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spoken Story</th>
<th>Written Story Text with iPad app (Matcha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One day there was a little turkey named (long pause) Hunter. One day he was</td>
<td>One day there was a turkey named Hunter. It was a foggy day and Hunter was playing outside. Then the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>playing outside with the other turkeys. He was his hands and his magical</td>
<td>Thanksgiving turkey bell rang. Then they rushed into the hen house. But Hunter’s hat fell off. Then he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>standing up legs. And then they heard the bell of the turkey feed picking.</td>
<td>went to grab it. Then a chef saw him and chased him away. Then he gets away by throwing his hat at him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then the turkey rushed inside. The turkey was standing on his legs and then</td>
<td>Then he felt happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his hat fell off. And then he needed to get it so he ran off to get it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once he rushed over to get his hat, he saw a chef. And he saw the turkey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and said, “You are mine now, turkey!” Then the turkey gets away by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>screaming. The chef plugs his ears because the scream is really, really</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loud. It hurts people’s ears. The turkey gets away and the chef lost him and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>picked out a different turkey. Which is very sad. They all felt sad about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the little turkey that died but they were all happy that he got away.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Illustrated Story Plan with iPad app (Doodle Buddy, 2013)
**STUDENTS’ CHANGE IN WRITING ABILITY OVER TIME**

From session one’s writing interest interviews (Rhodes, 1993), only two of the eight students defined themselves as being a poor writer. Kent said, “I am not good at handwriting and cannot spell words” (October 4, 2013). Kirk also commented about his handwriting being of poor quality. See Figure 1 for the story Kirk wrote in his classroom.

![Figure 1](image)

*Figure 1
Kirk’s initial Story Text

All students demonstrated improvement especially for spoken stories (see Table 3); student names with an asterisk (*) participated in an additional 24 sessions (45 minutes each) in addition to the intervention-phase sessions.

Students had apparently not learned about the benefits of oral story telling while planning previous to this project. The change in content and quality scores indicated the greatest amount of improvement. Spoken story scores also improved by the intervention phase albeit the amount was often less than what students demonstrated with spoken story content and quality. Wendy’s written content score actually declined slightly by the intervention phase. Vicky and Yury each attained two 7/7s for content during the intervention phase. Students’ text lengths ranged from 2-205 words.

During the timeline of the project, the author arranged for the three fourth-grade teachers to have a substitute come into their classroom so that they could observe an intervention-phase session of one of their students. The author also met with the teachers four times to discuss the students’ profiles for writing and their progress. Some students demonstrated persistent difficulty with writing. The author arranged with the teachers for two of the lower-scoring students to receive another 24 intervention sessions during January to March 2014.
Table 3

Participants’ Baseline versus Intervention Phase Mean Content and Quality Scores for Spoken and Written Stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Spoken Baseline</th>
<th>Written Baseline</th>
<th>Spoken Intervention</th>
<th>Written Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirk*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicky</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yury</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weston</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scores each on a 0-7 Scale
In a summary discussion, the teachers expressed their strong approval and like for the intervention programming. Cindy commented that, “Weston in particular changed his attitude to one of enjoyment and confidence. He has generalized his feeling of success to other areas. Wendy is still unsure of herself but is more likely to attempt writing assignments than prior to the project” (1/10/2014). Leslie commented how she liked the integration of art for story planning as well as the technology component. “I know that we are moving to more technology with Common Core, which is a good thing. I do not think keyboarding was frustrating for the students, but I think they would spend time looking for keys and therefore not have enough time to get more of their story written down” (12/8/2013). No one method may work for every student.

**Reflections and Suggestions for Classroom Practice**

The students’ improvement over time demonstrated that STORY and mnemonic-strategy instruction can help struggling writers. Step-by-step instruction, students’ practice, and teacher feedback offers children the means to develop a method of self-regulating the writing process. Keyboarding text gave students’ prose more clarity and ease for re-reading while editing to produce their final copy. The students liked participating in the writing activities and use of keyboarding. Students from diverse backgrounds were part of this project, and they made some of the most evident gains (e.g., Yury and Yana). Yury loved the oral story telling during planning. Victor commented that he would change the W=2 section of the cue questions. “I would change just the middle part to what happens first, next, and last” (12/3/2013).

The general education teachers liked STORY and the lesson plan components too. Tabitha commented: “I will definitely use the STORY format in the future, and although I do not have iPad access, I will do what I can to provide them with technology to support their writing (e.g., AlphaSmart, Dragon, etc.)” (12/1/2013).

Students varied as to spoken or written stories having higher scores during the intervention phase. For students who scored lower for spoken stories, they may have found multitasking to be difficult while making their illustrated story plan. Although students did not have to print to generate text, they did have to generate ideas for this first draft. Their mental resources may have been taxed by the time they keyboarded their written text. For students who did better with written texts, they had the benefit of all of the planning and illustrated notes made during the pre-writing phase. For this reason, the written texts should be of higher content and quality.

Writing skills can have a sporadic component to it. A story on a given day will not necessarily be as well written as a previous text. Weston was scoring in the bottom 25% of his class for writing ability. Once he arrived at the media center to begin writing stories, he demonstrated well-written texts. Now being outside of the classroom, maybe he was less distracted. Weston may have felt more pressured to perform; we made it clear that the student had the choice of being in the intervention sessions and could discontinue at any time.
Challenges of Teacher Expectations versus Students’ Individual Preferences and Story Products

In the process of teaching students the STORY mnemonic strategy, observing their interpretation of its use, and analyzing their story planning pictures, the author, intervention teachers, and general education teachers noted that the children did not always follow the intended plan. For example, the intervention teachers modeled answering all of the WWW, W=2, H=2 cue questions’ answers in their picture. Students did not follow this model even when reminded periodically to do so. People interpret a plan in their own way. As long as the students were demonstrating progress in their final copies, we allowed them this flexibility. Similarly, on a few days, some of the students would not say or write their story. There was no apparent rationale for this in terms of day of the week or topic. When the intervention teachers asked them, students stated that they chose not to. Machon (2013) asserts that, "a child’s frame of reference is different from that of an adult…. The child is dominated by their interests” (p. 361). The child may well be thinking and formulating ideas about what happened and what happened next, to name two examples, while focusing only on the characters in a visual illustration.

While murder and killing are part of many murder mysteries, should killing be permitted in story texts? It is difficult to sensor topics especially when the focus participants have difficulty generating story topics at the outset. These struggling writers had the option of choosing a story topic that they preferred, which about 50% of the time involved some level of killing but were not graphic in nature.

In scoring for quality, how can students’ scores account for creativity too? The story-quality rubric included a mix of aspects such as length, grammar, syntax, paragraphing, and use of voice. There was no specific score for creativity. If creativity was given more prominence in the scoring process, some students could have had higher scores. Kirk’s story below is one example:

Once upon a time there were these two bugs that looked alike. One was good one was bad. The bad one went to prison. The good one became a famous bug and the bad one became an evil bug. And then one day the two bugs met and that is when one of them got the idea why don’t we switch places then the bad bug found out that that bug was going to go to jail so he brought the bug to jail. And then the evil bug that was really the good one got thrown in jail and the good one got a medal. (Intervention phase, Session 9, March 11, 2014).

Kirk’s scores were five for content and four for quality. For creativity of plot, his score could have been a six or even seven. This is another reminder of how complex writing is and creativity should be considered when assessing students’ work.

Keep on Writing!

In the process of this project, students demonstrated their challenges with writing but improved with focused instruction and the use of technology. No one intervention will be a panacea for all students. Teachers need to have a variety of choices to offer students to manage academic tasks such as writing. STORY within an SRSD format provides one option.
The novelty and utility of an iPad with its art and text-generation apps can help make the text generation process more meaningful and manageable.

The practices of initially reviewing a published story, spelling practice, creating and combining sentences, and modeling and practicing story writing can be adapted for small or even whole class instructional formats. The teacher can read a short story posted on an Elmo projector, review some of the words for spelling, ask student volunteers to create some sentences and combine them with conjunction words, and compose a short story together with the class using the STORY acrostic of steps. Good and even proficient writers may appreciate STORY’s format and included cue questions. Continued and more focused practice may then be devoted to the children who have more difficulty. Ongoing review and practice can provide for students’ growth over time and sense of accomplishment.

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