Our goal is to help students become competent, confident writers in school and beyond.

How does teaching sentence fluency and grammar contribute to this goal?

How does teaching sentence fluency and grammar relate to Common Core State Standards and national assessments of writing?

What Is Sentence Fluency?

“Sentence fluency is graceful, varied, rhythmic—almost musical. It’s easy to read aloud. Sentences are well built. They move. They are varied in structure and length. Each one seems to flow right out of the one before. Strong sentence fluency is marked by logic, creative phrasing, parallel construction, alliteration, and word order that makes reading feel natural.”

Ruth Culham, The 6+1 Traits of Writing (Scholastic, 2003)
Strategy 2: SENTENCE EXPANSION

Sentence expansion is a revision strategy in which writers begin with a short sentence and add information to the beginning, middle, and/or end of the sentence.

Sentence expansion encourages writers to vary the structures and lengths of sentences to create rhythm and flow in the writing.

As writers expand sentences with words, phrases, and clauses, they learn grammar and make their writing more detailed and more interesting for the audience.

A Mini-Workshop on Sentence Imitation

How Do These Three Sentence Fluency Strategies Improve Students’ Knowledge of Grammar?

• Students read, analyze, and craft sentences that are effective for the writing purpose, audience, and genre.
• Students learn the relationship between sentence effectiveness (revision) and sentence correctness (editing).
• Students apply grammar, usage, and mechanics in the context of their own writing.

Strategy 3: SENTENCE IMITATION

Sentence imitation invites writers to “copy” the structure of a model sentence, but to replace the original words and ideas with new words and ideas.

Through sentence imitation, writers analyze and emulate the structure, flow, rhythm, and grammar of the model sentence.

Writers also discover the relationship between meaning and sentence structure. Sentence imitation encourages “writing like a reader” and “reading like a writer.”

A Mini-Workshop on Sentence Expansion

How does teaching sentence fluency and grammar relate to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts?

• All of these strategies for teaching sentence fluency and grammar will help students accomplish the Common Core State Standards.
• All of these strategies are recommended in Writing Next and other research studies.

Teaching Sentence Fluency and Grammar to Help Students Become Competent, Confident Writers by Beverly Ann Chin for NCEA 2011
Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts address

- Text Types and Purposes
- Production and Distribution of Writing
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Range of Writing

Criteria for Evaluating Responses on the 2011 Writing Framework of National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP)

- Development of ideas is effective in relation to the writer’s purpose and audience.
- Organization is logical in relation to the writer’s purpose and audience.

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts also address

- Conventions of Standard English
  - Correct grammar, usage, and mechanics
- Knowledge of Language
  - Different contexts
  - Effective choices
  - Increasing comprehension

Criteria for Evaluating Responses on the 2011 Writing Framework of National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP)

- Language facility and conventions support clarity of expression and the effectiveness of the writing in relation to the writer’s purpose and audience.
  - Sentence structure and sentence variety
  - Word choice
  - Voice and tone
  - Grammar, usage, and mechanics

How does teaching sentence fluency and grammar help students on national assessments of writing?

- Most national assessments of writing require students to demonstrate their knowledge of effective sentence structures and correct grammar, usage, and mechanics.
- Assessments of sentence fluency and grammar vary in format: objective items and/or essay writing.

By teaching sentence combining, sentence expansion, and sentence imitation, we ...

- engage our students as active learners, critical readers, and thoughtful writers;
- show relationships among writing purpose, audience, genre, and language choices;
- teach writing as decision-making and inquiry;

Teaching Sentence Fluency and Grammar to Help Students Become Competent, Confident Writers by Beverly Ann Chin for NCEA 2011
By teaching sentence combining, sentence expansion, and sentence imitation, we ...

• integrate grammar instruction naturally and creatively into writing instruction;
• integrate the language arts;
• nurture and empower our students’ voices; and
• celebrate our students’ growth and accomplishments in writing.

When we teach sentence fluency and grammar using these research-based strategies, we help our students become effective communicators, critical thinkers, and lifelong learners for school and beyond.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

NCTE/IRA Standards for English Language Arts
http://www.ncte.org/standards

NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing
http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/writingbeliefs

Writing Now—A Policy Research Brief by NCTE

ARTICLES written by BEVERLY ANN CHIN

“The Role of Grammar in Improving Students’ Writing”
“Best Practices for Teaching Grammar at the Elementary Grades”
“Effective Strategies for Engaging Middle School Students in Writing and Grammar Instruction”
“Teaching Meaningful Revision: Developing and Deepening Students’ Writing”

Articles are available at http://www.sadlier-oxford.com/prof_development.cfm

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Common Core State Standards
http://www.corestandards.org

Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve the Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools
http://www.all4ed.org/files/WritingNext.pdf

2011 Writing Framework for National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

Beverly Ann Chin
Senior Series Consultant for these Sadlier Programs

• Grammar Workshop GRADES 3-5
• Grammar for Writing GRADES 6-12
• Writing Workshop GRADES 6-12
• Grammar and Writing for Standardized Tests GRADES 9-12