

Teacher Methods of Supporting Students' Writing

This guide provides instructions and examples for three strategies educators can use to support student writing: sentence framing, sentence expanding, and sentence combining. For more information, read our previous blog post [“Developing Writers in the Classroom: Fluency With Writing Mechanics and an Engaged Community of Writers”](#) by Jen Knight, Ph.D.

Sentence Framing

Sentence framing is a scaffolding method used by teachers to support struggling writers. Teachers provide either a verbal or written question to students and then a sentence frame consisting of a partial sentence with a blank space for students to fill in one or more words to complete the sentence.

Examples

What is your favorite food?
My favorite food is _____.

What do you like to do on the weekend?
I like to _____ on the weekend.

Who should you call when you have an emergency?
I should call _____ when I have an emergency because _____.

Why do different types of animals migrate?
Animals migrate to different locations to allow them to _____ and _____.

Sentence Expanding

Sentence expanding is a scaffolding method used by teachers to encourage students to add to their existing writing. Students learn how to add one or more words, phrases, or clauses to their writing to provide a more detailed description.

Examples

My dog likes pizza. So do I.
My dog likes **pepperoni** pizza. So do I.

I have a pet.

I have a **cute, brown, fuzzy bunny named Pete**.

We heard music playing.

We heard **sinister, loud** music playing **in the park near our house**.

A teacher spoke to the boys in the hallway.

A **kind and gentle** teacher spoke **with a soft and caring demeanor** to the boys in the hallway.

Sentence Combining

Sentence combining is a scaffolding method used by teachers to teach students to organize or manipulate their short, choppy sentences to make them more effective sentences. The goal is not to produce longer sentences, but this often is the result of making them more effective and utilizing different sentence types.

Examples

My cat is soft.

My cat is white.

My cat is black.

My black and white cat is soft.

The wizard had a beard and a moustache.

The beard was bushy.

The beard was long.

The moustache was droopy.

The wizard had a long, bushy beard and a droopy moustache.

The woman handed me a photograph of a baby.

She did this silently.

The woman was old.

The baby was sleeping.

The baby was beautiful.

The old woman silently handed me a photograph of a beautiful sleeping baby.