

# Writing, Spelling, and Grammar

Writing, spelling, and grammar continue to be highly related as students learn to communicate more effectively in the upper grades. Older students must continue to have the process of writing modeled for them as they often want to write pieces of more significance and importance. Therefore, stronger connections need to be made between the literature which students read and what they write. They need to learn more sophisticated tools for expressing their thoughts and writing to present increasingly more important information. Some form of the writing workshop is an appropriate way to do this.

As students become more sophisticated writers, they must become more sophisticated spellers. As their vocabulary knowledge increases, students will need to be able to spell more words. As in the primary grades, students learn to spell by being taught certain spelling patterns and by having the opportunity to write and use their knowledge of spelling. Students in the intermediate grades profit from having the patterns of spelling they are learning be the same as the ones they are learning in word study and phonics.

As students become more sophisticated writers and do more writing, they will also need to use a greater variety of structures of language. Therefore, they need to learn grammar and use what they are learning in their writing. Grammar should not be taught as an isolated subject; rather, it should always be connected to writing.

Well-developed, research-based materials for literacy instruction in grades 4-8 must include a strong component for modeling writing, teaching spelling, and teaching grammar. All of these elements must be continuously connected to each other. The following quotations provide support for the conclusions drawn in this section:

• **1991 - Hodges**

“ . . . a spelling course of study can emphasize an examination of structural relationships among written words rather than treating the spelling of each word as a specific act of learning.” (p. 776)

“ . . . much of what is learned about spelling is gained by noticing recurring patterns encountered in functional settings and trying out and revising hypotheses about these patterns in other writing situations.” (p. 781)

**•1991 - Hillocks & Smith**

“ . . . the grammar sections of a textbook should be treated as a reference tool that might provide some insight into conventions of mechanics and usage.” (p. 600)

**•1998 - Dahl & Farnan**

“The research reviewed in this chapter suggests that when teachers help students think about and use writing strategies related to writing process, students’ writing improves. One of the most effective ways of teaching writing-process strategies is through demonstration.” (pp. 18-19)

“ . . . researchers found that as children expand their writing repertoires, they write most frequently about personal experience.” (p. 29)

**•2000 - Templeton & Morris**

“Given the studies that have investigated the effect of examining words in the context of an active search for pattern, . . . there are some general conclusions that are at least strongly suggested:

- For most students an inductive or exploratory approach is appropriate; for severely struggling spellers who are working at an appropriate developmental level, a more deductive, systematic, and direct approach is preferred.
- An emphasis on the interrelatedness of spelling and phonics, morphology, and vocabulary. This emphasis includes the explicit presentation and discussion of how morphology is represented in the spelling system; this allows a significant merger of spelling and vocabulary instruction.
- An emphasis in teacher preparation and professional development programs on the need for developing teachers’ knowledge base about word structure, thus being empowered to facilitate students’ development of word knowledge.” (p. 538)