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About the Journal

Founded in 2013, the Journal of Teacher Action Research (ISSN: 2332-2233) is a peer-reviewed online journal indexed with EBSCO that seeks practical research that can be implemented in Pre-Kindergarten through Post-Secondary classrooms. The primary function of this journal is to provide classroom teachers and researchers a means for sharing classroom practices.

The journal accepts articles for peer-review that describe classroom practice which positively impacts student learning. We define teacher action research as teachers (at all levels) studying their practice and/or their students' learning in a methodical way in order to inform classroom practice. Articles submitted to the journal should demonstrate an action research focus with intent to improve the author's practice.

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HELPING STRUGGLING WRITERS THROUGH EFFECTIVE SPELLING AND WRITING STRATEGIES

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Abstract In every classroom, some students struggle more than others in writing. When writing and spelling are used in conjunction, it requires students to develop their thoughts to produce a piece of writing. The literature review highlights how important it is for students to learn effective strategies to better support writing and spelling. Teaching students effective strategies to support writing, such as Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) and Making and Writing Words (MWW) for spelling, offer students guidance to help build their self-esteem as writers. This study was conducted in a second-grade classroom. It focused on narrative writing using both mentioned strategies. The methods used were qualitative in which students were given a pre-and post-questionnaire on how they saw and what they liked about writing. The writing intervention spanned for five weeks, including modeling, instruction, and applying both strategies. The spelling strategy was only implemented with a small group of students. The results showed significant growth in student knowledge in writing narratives, and the focus group showed improvement in their spelling application. Overall, students showed confidence as writers and an increase in their writing and spelling abilities.

Keywords: teacher action research, self-regulated strategy development (SRSD), making and writing words (MWW), writing, spelling, narrative writing

Introduction

The art of expression can use words to convey a message. In the classroom, students are taught to use pencil and paper to write down their feelings, emotions, and important thoughts. To write words, however, one needs to know how to spell. As students move beyond the phonetic stage, proper spelling becomes increasingly important. Therefore, in the classroom, teachers must teach students effective strategies to prepare students to spell and become writers. No matter how effective a strategy in these two areas might be, there are always students who will struggle. Thus, teachers must continue to look for additional strategies to help their students who need that extra assistance.

The purpose of this study was to implement strategies in both spelling and writing that would help students strengthen these areas. The research questions used to guide this intervention were: Can student writing improve by using self-regulated strategy development (SRSD)? The second question was: Does making and writing words (MWW)

strategy help improve spelling that would translate to student writing? The duration of the intervention was five weeks.

Literature Review

In the literature reviewed regarding research in writing, Tracy et al. (2009) described how effective writing strategies such as SRSD (Self-Regulated Strategy Development) could improve students' quality of writing. Each participating student in their study received instruction on how to use this strategy. At the end of the intervention, their writing was qualitatively better. The writing samples contained complete sentences, all story elements (characters, setting, plot, problem, solution, ending), and were longer in length. Independent student success was also measured by how well students maintained the strategy as a reference tool during writing assignments.

To analyze the process of word formation, one needs to consider the spelling strategies applied to produce each word. To facilitate word formation, students need to see how words are constructed from similar spelling root words. Rasinski and Oswald (2005) modeled the MWW (Making and Writing Words) strategy to a controlled group of elementary students. These students were able to self-identify small words found in larger, more complex structured words. Providing this type of spelling instruction helps students become familiar with spelling patterns and self-correct their writing.

Spelling Instruction. Spelling instruction is considered to be an essential factor that contributes to the production of writing. In the primary grades, this idea is evident due to the important skills spelling is composed of that are tied with learning to write. These skills include awareness of the number of letters and sounds in a word, common patterns for short and long vowels, and spell words with inflectional endings (Joshi et al., 2008-2009). Once a student has gained strong spelling knowledge, it often, but not always, transfers into writing. As students become more aware of the connection between spelling, forming words, and writing, they acquire orthographic knowledge to become expert writers. Graham et al. (2008) conducted a study on how well primary teachers implemented spelling instruction and made adaptations for struggling students. They initiated their study by administering a survey of 168 teachers in the United States. The sample of teachers included teachers working at both public and private schools. The community settings included urban, suburban, and rural. Based on the survey results, primary teachers taught spelling using different activities and instructional procedures to help students learn phonics, spelling rules, and strategies weekly. Fifty-seven percent of teachers reported using commercial materials to teach some aspect of spelling. Others reported using stand-alone programs and basal reading series to guide their instruction. Each approach measured achievement based on student performance. No one approach was better than the other because students were performing at or below grade level.

Fresch (2007) conducted a national survey of 296 teachers across the country in urban, suburban, and rural communities. They were concerned with showing how spelling instruction was being delivered and students' capacity to apply it to independent writing. In

this survey, many teacher respondents felt that writing words several times helped students remember, yet these words were not carried over to written work. Other findings in this survey pointed out that students often cannot spell words they know how to spell in situations other than the formal lesson. The cause for this is that students feel that once they take that weekly spelling test, those words are "buried," once the spelling test is administered, students do not realize the importance of carrying over these words into independent writing (p. 320). Fresch (2007) further elaborated that students need to understand spelling rules and apply them to become better spellers. Thus, it will help them gain knowledge in word construction.

Graham and Santangelo (2014) conducted a meta-analytic review of studies that focused on teaching spelling to develop phonological awareness to improve spelling performance. In their analysis, each study included students in Kindergarten to 12th grade who received some form of spelling instruction. Their findings showed that students who received consistent and robust support in spelling instruction improved in phonological awareness. In the area of writing, students were able to spell more words correctly.

Writing Instruction. In analyzing student writers and their experiences, Lin et al. (2007) conducted a study where both developing and struggling writers in grades 2 to 8 were interviewed on how they saw themselves as writers and what a good writer does. In this study, the researchers selected one elementary and one middle school in the Pacific Northwest in an urban community. Both schools were culturally and linguistically diverse. In grades two to eight, each teacher selected four students (two developing and two struggling) from their classroom. The teachers chose the students as displaying developing or struggling writing skills. The researchers gathered their data through 20-30 minutes of one-on-one interviews with each student.

According to their findings, "novice writers are not as proficient as expert writers; novice writers are overwhelmed by transcription and working memory demands during writing" (Lin et al., p. 208). The cause for this is because novice writers are learning how to write through reading, which leads them to begin to spell words they have memorized. However, proficient writers who have had more exposure to writing have built a strong background knowledge and positive attitude towards writing. Along the same lines of creating a positive attitude for writing, proficient writers focus more on the organization and less on mechanics. Consequently, less skilled writers concentrate more on surface-level features: spelling, punctuation, and grammar (Berry, 2006).

When writing is seen either from a proficient or less proficient view, it all ties back to how well the writing instruction was delivered. A student's writing experience is based on how much emphasis the teacher places on the writing process and integration to other genres in writing (Berry, 2006). Graham et al. (2008) stated that writers who have spelling difficulties would not use words they cannot spell. When this attitude is taken from the writer, it limits the message that needs to be conveyed. It also goes back to the teacher's effectiveness in teaching spelling. Thus, teaching spelling and writing effectively has to do with the teacher's knowledge and confidence in teaching these two subject areas. Students are at

a disadvantage when there is a gap in either area, which translates into poor academic growth for struggling students and not challenging developing students to their full potential.

Spelling and Writing Strategies. Writing is part of the gateway for successful employment in today's society. It serves as a means to communicate effectively and transmit one's thoughts. As technology increases, writing takes on increasingly diverse forms, including texting, messaging, and blogging. For someone to use these new ways of communication, good writing skills and strategies are needed. Tracy et al. (2009) conducted a study where 127 third-grade students from a mid-western elementary school received writing instruction in their general education classroom. The 127 students were from six classrooms, where three classrooms were selected to receive SRSD strategy instruction, and the rest received traditional writing instruction. Both groups were administered the Test of Written Language (TOWL3) before writing intervention using the SRSD strategy. Previous state standardized scores for each student were analyzed to see any discrepancies in student performance. The SRSD model consists of the following: 1.) develop background knowledge, 2.) discuss the strategy, 3.) model strategy, 4.) memorize strategy, 5.) support/ scaffold the strategy. 6.) encourage independent use (p. 194). Participating students who received SRSD showed improvement in writing performance, demonstrating that teaching students strategies and highly scaffolded procedures can lead to successful results.

The techniques used by teachers implementing the SRSD strategy required students to memorize specific acronyms to help them apply the writing strategy: one of these is the POW strategy (Pick my idea, Organize my notes, Write and say more) (Tracy et al., 2009). This mnemonic device allows students, both developing and poor writers, to think about an idea first before writing. A graphic organizer is used to organize their notes and ideas and develop clear thoughts to write a cohesive essay. The last focus area is to encourage students to write more and expand their ideas once written down on paper.

Once students feel confident and show POW mastery, they can apply genre-specific strategies to their writing, such as WWW +2H, which stands for 1). Who are the main characters? 2). When does it take place? 3). What happens next? 4). How do the main characters feel? 5). How does it end? This strategy is designed to be used when writing a story. It allows teachers to instruct students in identifying story elements in their writing, such as the sequence of events, inferring character feelings, and identifying character traits. Another strategy that bolsters writing is focused on teaching students how to spell by making words. Rasinski and Oswald (2005) collaborated on a two-year project conducted in a second-grade classroom. The participating teacher (Ruth Oswald) introduced this strategy in her classroom and another partner (a second-grade teacher) at the same school site. Oswald implemented the MWW (Making and Writing Words) strategy. Only nine students were selected as being high achieving (3), average (3), and struggling (3). The other participating teacher used the district's adopted basal program and selected nine students using the same criteria.

With this spelling strategy, students are given vowel letters and consonant letters to write on a graphic organizer. The teacher then gives students clues using the letters written to make new words. Through the lesson, students are encouraged to see how each word is formed and what letters are used in each word. Students then notice how each word contains similar letters. An example given by the teacher, Oswald, is when students formed the word "hate" and compared it to heat. Some noticed that /ea/ does not always have a long sound "head."

Another example was a spelling error one student made and independently corrected. The word was "becase," which the student visually identified as not looking right and fixed it. With this strategy, students were able to see little words in huge words, for example, "sea" add "m," and it makes "seam" (Rasinski & Oswald, 2005). Having students take part in their learning of language through scaffolded instruction helps facilitate understanding of how language works—resulting in spelling knowledge to be transferred into other curricular areas where writing is required.

Assessing Student Spelling and Writing. Once a child has mastered spelling and writing strategies, a teacher's job is to assess students' errors. To determine a child's spelling errors, sufficient samples need to be collected (Apel & Masterson, 2001). In a case study conducted by Apel and Masterson (2001), a 13-year-old student demonstrated low self-esteem, always complained about school, and felt embarrassed about her performance. She avoided writing due to poor spelling skills. She lacked phonemic awareness and orthographic skills, according to her tests. The lack of phonemic awareness for this student's writing was evident in errors of omission (example: "sop" for "stop"). To address such orthographic skills, instruction should focus on teaching spelling strategies and finding words with similar patterns to help create orthographic images of words. This case study showed that the implementation of specific spelling intervention proved to be successful in targeting deficient skills in spelling. The student in this study was able to gain phonemic and decoding skills to aid in spelling and decoding unfamiliar words. The success also involved the modeling and scaffolding of new strategies that focused on the student's deficient skills.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to see how small-group spelling instruction and instruction in self-regulated writing strategies can help struggling writers improve. Through effective instruction of explicit strategies in writing and spelling, struggling spellers gained more confidence in their writing, and all students improved in the overall quality of their writing. The two strategies discussed in this literature review were implemented in a second-grade classroom. The two strategies are SRSD (Self-Regulated Strategy Development) and MWW (Making Words Work).

The rationale for selecting these two strategies was to address concerns in the quality of students' writing and spelling. For the spelling strategy, not all students received the intervention. The intervention was for students whose spelling errors were severe and

impeded the deciphering of words. The SRSD strategy was implemented to encourage students to improve their writing by including enough details to elaborate on their ideas. The students in this study needed a strategy to boost their confidence and not shut down when asked to produce a writing piece.

Participants. This study's participants were a convenience sample of second-grade students, which included 12 girls and 7 boys. The socio-economic status of all students is lower-middle working class. All students were included in the writing strategy portion of the study. For the study's spelling strategy portion, a focus group of four students received small group instruction. These four students struggled with both spelling and writing. These participants were specifically selected based on weekly spelling test scores in which they routinely score 50% or lower. The focus group's composition is as follows: one student has ADHD and is taking medication, one has shown signs of dyslexia (though not diagnosed), and two have a learning disability in processing the information as stated in their IEP.

Intervention. There were two components to the intervention: a whole class writing strategy intervention and a supplemental spelling strategy focused only on struggling spellers. The writing consisted of a personal narrative, including a beginning, middle, and end. Students were expected to add details and write these in sequential order. The focus group received additional spelling instruction.

The first step in identifying with which spelling patterns the focus group had difficulties, a word inventory was used to identify these patterns. Next, the MWW strategy was introduced to encourage students to think of how words are made from other words. During each week of the intervention, students were given specific letter tiles to sort out words with similar orthographic patterns and used appendix D. Students sorted letter tiles that contained the letters for the weekly spelling words into vowels and consonants. To illustrate this idea, let say students had ten spelling words, and only 15 letters can be used to form all words, then students could only use the letters given. Next, the teacher provided students with clues using the weekly spelling list. Then, students using the given letter tiles listened to each clue and placed the corresponding letter tiles in the order given to form the word. The clues helped students connect sounds to letters and develop phonemic awareness. The exact process was repeated for each spelling word and placed next to each numbered box in appendix D.

For the intervention's writing, all students were taught story structure using the WWW+2H mnemonic strategy to identify all the elements. A reading selection from the reading program was selected. The teacher taught a short lesson on story structure using appendix F and modeled how to fill in each section.

Week one. During the first week, the pre-assessment writing prompt (see Appendix A) was administered to all students. The assessment asked students to write about something special they did with a friend. Students were encouraged to include as many story elements as they remembered. To self-report how many story elements they had included in their story, students were given a story rocket graphic organizer (see Appendix B) and

were asked to fill this out. The organizer was explained previously and used to help them monitor their story writing. The pre-assessment story was graded by using a 4-point rubric (see Appendix C). All students were given a ten-question survey (see Appendix D) to measure their attitudes towards writing. The focus group was also assigned a five-question survey (see Appendix I) to measure their spelling attitudes.

The school's adopted language arts curriculum was used to help students understand story structure using the reading unit's text selections. As part of the phonics section, the focus was on words with the suffix -er. A spelling lesson was implemented to introduce and decode the words as outlined in the reading program. Following the lesson, students were given a practice spelling test with words using the -er suffix. This test aimed to see what words students could spell already and which ones they needed to study. After this, the focus students (low-performing spellers) were re-taught the -er spelling pattern in a small group setting using the MWW (Making Words Work) strategy. Students were given a graphic organizer (see Appendix D) to complete this activity.

Next, a teacher-led discussion was used to introduce the following two strategies as part of SRSD: POW (Pick my idea, Organize my notes, and Write) and WWW+What2+How2 (Who is the main character, When does the story take place. Where does the story take place, What do the characters do, What happens then, How does the story end, and How do the characters feel) (see Appendix E). These mnemonic devices were placed on chart paper for visual purposes and explained to students.

To provide students practice with the strategy, a graphic organizer (see Appendix F) was used along with a copy of a teacher-selected story. Students read along silently while the teacher read the story out loud. Students were then asked to identify Who, When, and Where student responses were recorded under the graphic organizer's appropriate space. The teacher modeled writing phrases instead of full sentences to help students get the idea down on paper and later translate these ideas (phrases) into sentences. This routine continued for the What2 and How2 parts. Students were given another short story to help them transfer the strategy. This time students were paired with a partner and given a new graphic organizer to identify all seven parts of a story.

Week two. In the second week, the same strategy for spelling MWW was implemented just with the focus students. The lesson's focus was on using words with contractions. Students were provided with the MWW graphic organizer to complete (see Appendix D). To see if all students remembered the strategies introduced, the teacher reviewed the charts. Prompting was used when needed. The students were reminded of these terms each day to make sure they had them memorized.

Week three. In the third week of the intervention, all students' spelling focus was writing and reading words that end with -y. The focus group practiced the spelling pattern using the MWW strategy and graphic organizer (see Appendix D). A copy of the POW and WWW+What2+How2 graphic organizer was displayed on a document camera for students. The teacher introduced the day's lesson by telling students, "Remember that the first letter

in POW is P-pick my idea. Today we are going to practice how to think of a good story idea and good story parts. To do this, we have to be creative." The second letter in POW was reintroduced, which is O-ORGANIZE. To organize the story, students reviewed WWW+What2+How. The final letter in POW, which is W-Write, was modeled. As the story was written, students were told to use "million-dollar words" in their writing. These descriptive words help students describe an object, place, or character. To conclude the lesson as a whole class, the story elements used were graphed by completing the story rocket- appendix B.

Week four. Week four was the final week for the spelling strategy MWW to be implemented with the focus group. The focus was on words ending with -er and -ing. The MWW organizer was used. After presenting all the parts of the SRSD writing model to students, at this point were given practice in applying the strategy. First, the teacher reviewed and reminded students of the strategy and verbally stated the expectations as they wrote their stories. Students were given the choice of writing a story on any topic for this assignment. After they were done, they assessed their writing piece and graphed the story elements they used by completing the story rocket graphic organizer (Appendix B). As noted previously, this organizer allowed students to count the number of story elements included in their own stories and color in that number on a graph. The goal was to increase the number of boxes in each graph to fill all boxes. Students were encouraged to count the number of words they used, write the number on the top right-hand corner of the paper (Appendix G), and color the corresponding number. Consequently, the stories students wrote had more words and details.

Week five. In the last week of the study, all students were assessed on how well they used the POW and WWW+ What2+How2 strategies when writing. They were given a formal writing prompt (see Appendix H) and were required to include all seven-story elements. They were given another story rocket graph (see Appendix B) to monitor their writing independently. All students' writing was graded on a 4-point scale rubric (see Appendix C) to measure how well they mastered the strategy and story writing.

Results and Discussion

Writing Assessment. Table 1 shows the results obtained from the writing assessment given to students both before and after the intervention period. This assessment consisted of a writing prompt where students were given a topic. In this case, they had to write about spending time with a friend (pre-assessment) and about a time they were brave (post-assessment). During the administration of each writing prompt, students were presented with stories related to the topic (i.e., friendship or bravery) to help build students' background knowledge. Each student's writing sample was graded using a four-point rubric (see Appendix C), and average scores for each category on the rubric were calculated for both the entire class (see Table 4.1 below) and focus students (see Table 4.2 below).

Table 1: Pre-and Post-Intervention Writing Prompt Average Scores Per Rubric Category: Entire Class (N=19)

Rubric Category	Baseline (out of 4 pts. Total)	Intervention	Change
Writing Process	2.4	3.4	+1.0
Focus on Topic	2.6	3.4	+0.8
Organization	2.4	3.6	+1.2
Punctuation	2.1	3.4	+1.3
Spelling	2.0	3.5	+1.5

Students scored an average between 2.0 and 2.6 points out of 4.0 points on each element of the rubric on the pre-assessment writing prompt. The lowest average score (2.0) was in the area of spelling, while the highest average score (2.6) was in the area of staying focused on topic. After the intervention, students' average scores changed in all categories, as shown above, with a total average of 3.5. On the post-intervention writing prompt, the highest average score (3.6) was in the organization, while the lowest average scores (3.4) were in the writing process, focus on the topic, and punctuation. As indicated in the final column, each average score changed for the better, with scores in most areas improving by at least 1.0. Average scores for the focus group students on each rubric element were also calculated (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Pre-and Post-Intervention Writing Prompt Average Scores Per Rubric Category: Focus Group (N=4)

Rubric Category	Baseline (out of 4 pts. Total)	Intervention (out of 4 pts. Total)	Change
Writing Process	1.8	3.3	+1.5
Focus on Topic	2.3	3.3	+1.0
Organization	1.8	3.5	+1.7
Punctuation	1.5	3.3	+1.8
Spelling	1.0	3.5	+2.5

Table 2 above shows average scores from the focus group students on each element of the rubric. Before the intervention, the lowest average score of 1.0 was in spelling; after the intervention, the average score in this area went up to 3.5. There was growth in all other areas of the rubric as well.

Table 3: Pre- and Post-Intervention Writing Prompt: Average Number of Story Elements Used

	Baseline	Intervention	Change
Entire Class	4	7	+3
Focus Group	3	7	+4

Table 3 above shows the average number of story elements students included in their writing before and after the intervention. On the baseline assessment, the entire class averaged the use of four out of the seven elements. After the intervention, they were able to include all seven. As for the focus group, during the baseline assessment, they had three out of the seven elements, which was one less than the entire class's average. After the intervention, their stories also included all seven elements.

Spelling Assessment. In addition to implementing the writing intervention, a focus group of struggling students in spelling received additional support. Table 4 below shows their average pre-intervention and post-intervention spelling test scores using the MWW strategy.

Table 4: Focus Group Pre- and Post- Intervention Average Spelling Test Scores: Focus Group Students (N=4)

Student	Baseline (out of 100 pts)	Intervention (out of 100 pts)	Change in pts.
Josh	86.5	89.5	+3
Sal	62.2	78.5	+16.3
Chris	67.7	65.8	-1.9
Abby	42.7	44.8	+2.1

Table 4 above shows improvement for three of the four students in their pre-and post-intervention spelling test scores. Sal improved the most by 16.3 points. Chris did not improve; instead, his score decreased by 1.9 points.

Survey Results. Table 5 below shows results from a survey all students were given both before and after the intervention. The survey's purpose was to see how students felt towards writing and what part of writing specifically they liked or did not like. This survey consisted of ten questions, asking students to check "yes," "sometimes," or "no" for each one.

Table 5: Writing Survey Results: Pre-Intervention and Post-Intervention (N=19)

	Yes	Pre-Intervention Sometimes	No	Yes	Post-Intervention Sometimes	No
1. I like writing stories.	9	9	1	17	2	0
2. Writing is boring.	1	6	12	0	3	16
3. I like writing at school.	16	3	0	17	2	0
4. I have trouble thing about what to write.	4	13	2	4	7	0
5. Writing is fun.	13	5	2	4	7	8
6. I think I'm a good writer.	12	6	1	16	3	0
7. I like to share my writing with others.	12	7	0	14	5	0
8. I like to write about things I have learned.	15	4	0	18	1	0
9. It helps me to have someone read over my writing.	16	0	3	19	0	0
10. I like to think about ideas before I write.	16	3	0	17	2	0

Overall, the survey results show that students like to write and think writing is fun. On the pre-intervention survey, responses for questions 1 and 5 fell heavily under - "yes" and "sometimes." After the intervention, the scores in these same two questions fell under "yes" the most. The two questions whose responses did not change as much were questions 6 and 7. These questions asked students if they thought they were a good writer and liked to share their writing. The table shows twelve responded "yes" for both questions (pre-intervention) and answered sixteen "yes" (for question 6) and fourteen for (question 7) post-intervention. The remaining questions in the survey showed a positive difference in students' attitudes after the intervention.

An example is that students found it easier to write their story using the strategy instead of not knowing what to write (question 4). Another example is that students enjoyed writing stories. As shown in the table above (question 1), their "yes" responses nearly doubled after the intervention. Students, in general, felt better and more confident about their writing. In addition to completing the writing survey, the focus group of four "struggling speller" students received another five-question survey on their attitude towards spelling (see Table 6 below), with each question asking students to circle "yes," "sometimes," or "no."

Table 6: Focus Group Spelling Survey Results: Pre-Intervention and Post- Intervention (N=4)

	Yes	Pre-Intervention No	Sort of	Yes	Post-Intervention No	Sort of
1. Are you a good speller?	3	0	1	4	0	0
2. What do you do when you don't know how to spell? Do you sound it out?	1	0	3	3	1	0
3. Do you like spelling?	4	0	0	3	0	1
4. Do you study for spelling tests?	3	0	1	3	0	1
5. Do you like writing words?	4	0	0	4	0	0

The results from this survey show that the focus students' confidence towards their spelling (as indicated in question one) increased after the intervention, given that all four students at that point said, "Yes, I am a good speller." On Question 2 before the intervention, when students were asked what they did when they couldn't spell a word, most (3 out of 4) of them answered that they sort of sounded it out. After introducing the intervention, this changed to mostly "yes" (3 out of 4 students). Responses to the last three questions in the survey remained the same before and after the intervention. As for the third question, when asked if they like to spell during the pre-intervention, all students answered "yes" compared to three "yes" and one "sort of" for the post-intervention.

Conclusion

The focus of this study was to implement effective writing and spelling strategies. The collected data from both writing assessments and surveys proved that explicit instruction in research-based strategies helped improve student writing and spelling abilities. All participating students' attitudes towards writing changed due to their knowledge and proficiency in writing stories. This change was evidenced by student confidence in knowing how to write a narrative. Students found the mnemonic device helpful and easy to remember.

Most importantly, students were capable of applying SRSD. This study's results can help future and current teachers implement effective writing and or spelling strategies to guarantee success. For educators who might not feel comfortable enough to teach writing, this strategy provides explicit instructions on how each component works and should be taught. Students of all learning levels can benefit and strengthen their writing if they have a strategy they can use.

About the Author

Xochitl Morales holds a bachelor's degree in liberal studies from Cal State University Northridge, two master's degrees, one in child and adolescent literacy from Loyola Marymount University, and the other in education from Mount St. Mary's University. She is currently working on her doctoral degree from Chapman University with an emphasis on cultural and curricular studies. She is presently a full-time dual-language Spanish Kindergarten teacher and part-time college instructor. A strong advocate in creating a curriculum that includes all learners and incorporates problem-solving and critical thinking skills. A believer in equitable opportunities for all students in order to achieve success. Her professional interests focus on maintaining one's identity through first language maintenance, encouraging students to build an interest in literacy, and preparing teacher candidate students for fieldwork at the elementary level. She has been an educator for the past 15 years in grades K-5 and at the college level. Email: xmorales@chapman.edu

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Appendix A: Pre-Assessment

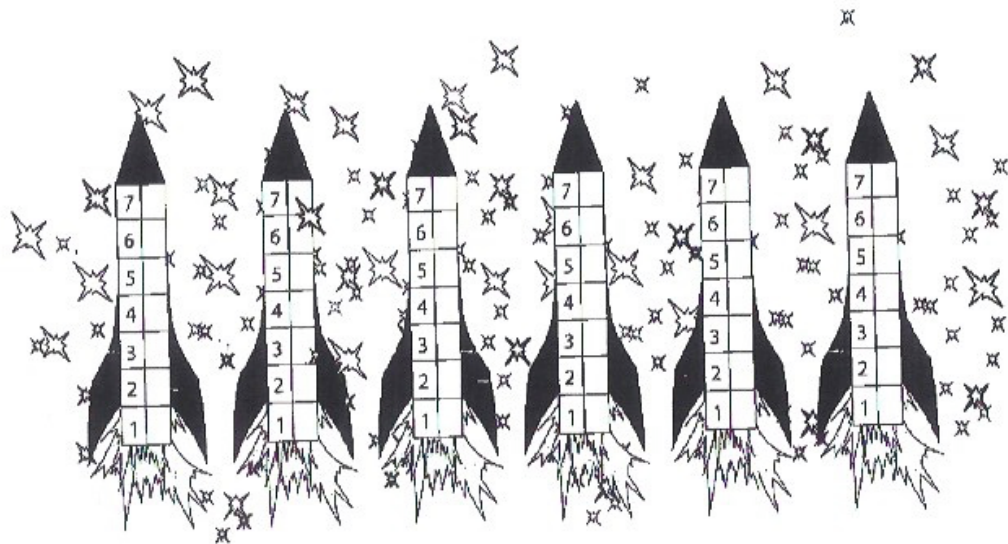
Directions: Think about a time you did something special with a friend.

Write a story that tells what you did with your friend. Include details such as: what happened, when did it happen and where it happened.

Checklist:

- *Write in complete sentences
- *Add details to your writing
- *Include beginning, middle, and end
- *Start a sentence with a capital letter and end with a period

Appendix B: Story Rockets



Story Rockets

Appendix B

Appendix C: Story Writing: Rubric for Pre- and Post-Assessment

48

Story Writing : Rubric for Pre- and Post-Assessment

Teacher Name: Ms. Morales

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Writing Process	Student devotes a lot of time and effort to the writing process (prewriting, drafting, reviewing, and editing). Works hard to make the story wonderful.	Student devotes sufficient time and effort to the writing process (prewriting, drafting, reviewing, and editing). Works and gets the job done.	Student devotes some time and effort to the writing process but was not very thorough. Does enough to get by.	Student devotes little time and effort to the writing process. Doesn't seem to care.
Focus on Assigned Topic	The entire story is related to the assigned topic and allows the reader to understand much more about the topic.	Most of the story is related to the assigned topic. The story wanders off at one point, but the reader can still learn something about the topic.	Some of the story is related to the assigned topic, but a reader does not learn much about the topic.	No attempt has been made to relate the story to the assigned topic.
Organization	The story is very well organized. One idea or scene follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.	The story is pretty well organized. One idea or scene may seem out of place. Clear transitions are used.	The story is a little hard to follow. The transitions are sometimes not clear.	Ideas and scenes seem to be randomly arranged.
Punctuation	There are no punctuation errors in the final draft.	There is 1 punctuation error in final draft.	There are 2-3 punctuation errors in the final draft.	The final draft has more than 3 punctuation errors.
Spelling	There are no spelling errors in the final draft. Character and place names that the author invented are spelled consistently throughout.	There is one spelling error in the final draft.	There are 2-3 spelling errors in the final draft.	The final draft has more than 3 spelling errors.

Appendix D: Making and Writing Words

Making and Writing Words – Appendix D

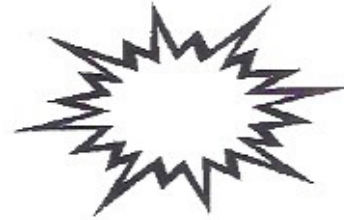
Vowels		Consonants	
1		5	
2		6	
3		7	
4		8	
Transfer			
T-1		T-2	
T-3		T-4	

Fr: Rasinski, T. (1999). Making and writing words. *Reading Online*. Available at <http://www.readingonline.org/articles/rasinski/>. Permission to photocopy for educational use is granted. See: Making and Writing Words. Rasinski and Heym. <http://www.shelldeducation.com/rasinski.php>

Appendix E: POW Strategy

POW

Pick my Idea
Organize my Notes
Write and Say More

**W-W-W WHAT=Z HOW=Z**

Who is the main character?
When does the story take place?
Where does the story take place?
What does the main character do or want to do; what other characters do?
What happens then? What happens with other characters?
How does the story end?
How does the main character feel; how do other characters feel?

Appendix F: Story Elements Organizer

POW + W-W-W

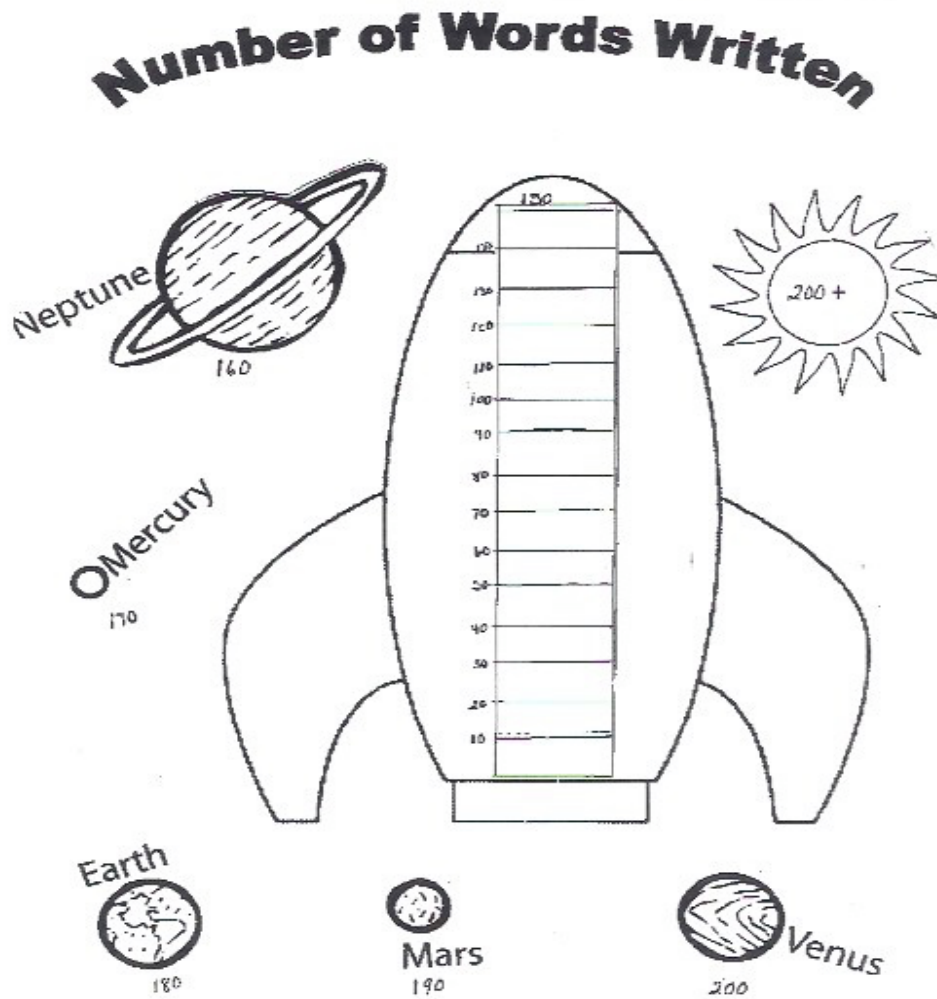
WHAT = 2
HOW = 2

WHO	WHEN	WHERE

WHAT	WHAT	HOW	HOW

Appendix G: Number of Words

52



Appendix H: Post-Assessment

Directions: Think about a time you helped someone, or someone helped you.

Write a story that tells what you did and includes details such as: what happened, when did it happen, and where it happened.

Checklist:

- *Write in complete sentences
- *Add details to your writing
- *Include beginning, middle, and end
- *Start a sentence with a capital letter and end with a period

Appendix I: Spelling Interest Survey

Name: _____
Date: _____

Spelling Interest Survey

Circle the best answer for each.

1. Are you a good speller?

Yes No Sort of

2. What do you do when you don't know how to spell do you sound it out?

Yes No Sometimes

3. Do you like spelling?

Yes No Sort of

4. Do you study for spelling tests?

Yes No Sometimes

5. Do you like writing words?

Yes No Sort of