

Common Issues with Teaching Conventions

- No clearly-defined curriculum
- Individual teachers making isolated decisions about what, when, and how to teach
- Too many needs
- Home usage in contrast/ conflict with school usage
- Children learn and forget or learn and use only with prompting (not internalized)

Understanding Conventions

- There are different kinds of conventions to teach
 - Letter formation and placement
 - Spelling (with different approaches for high frequency words and others)
 - Punctuation and capitalization
 - Grammar and usage
- We need to teach these in different ways
 - Direct, explicit instruction
 - Embedded and/or implicit instruction
 - Inquiry/ discovery
 - Isolated practice and purposeful retrieval practice
 - Holding students accountable in their independent work

Deciding What to Teach

- In the Writing Workshop model, curricular decision-making power is in the hands of the schools and districts who understand the needs of the children they serve (rather than a publishing company who can't)
- With this power comes a great responsibility to assess those needs and make a comprehensive plan to meet them.
- This should result in consistent content across grades and responsible articulation through grades.

Creating a Continuum

Teachers within and across grades work together to determine what to expect when

- Letter formation, handwriting, script
- Spelling
 - Automatic recall
 - Usage of strategies and tools for unknown words
 - Proper capitalization
- Grammar
- Punctuation

Gradual Release of Responsibility

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graph TD; A[To: Show and explain] --> B[With: Guide, coach and support]; B --> C[By: Hold students accountable];
```

Deciding How to Teach

- Direct, explicit instruction
- Embedded and/or implicit instruction
- Inquiry/ discovery
- Isolated practice
- Retrieval practice
- Accountability in independent writing

To
↓
With
↓
By

Direct, Explicit Instruction

- Teach the correct skill
 - High frequency words
 - Parts of speech
 - Punctuation
 - Standard grammar
- Identify challenges with spelling or grammar
 - Learning commonly misspelled or confused words
 - Learning common errors of usage

Embedded and/or Implicit Instruction

- Word Wall
- Noticing usage in shared reading texts (or in read aloud where appropriate)
- Pointing out convention usage in shared/interactive writing texts

Approaches to the Primary Grade Word Wall

- High frequency words (30-100-150)
- Onsets and rimes, using high frequency words as a base
- Indicate which words help with spelling other words
- May indicate parts of speech or have a separate place to collect these
- Spelling patterns vs. word families
- Content area word walls can address the vocabulary specific to that content

Spelling Patterns vs. Word Families

Make	Make
<input type="checkbox"/> Take	<input type="checkbox"/> Makes
<input type="checkbox"/> Sake	<input type="checkbox"/> Making
<input type="checkbox"/> Stake	<input type="checkbox"/> Maker
<input type="checkbox"/> Lake	<input type="checkbox"/> Remake
<input type="checkbox"/> Brake	

Approaches to the Upper Grade Word Wall

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- We should be past all the "most frequently used words" list. Instead consider your most frequently misspelled words.
- Looking at the building blocks of words in action (roots and affixes, and their meanings) goes a long way to building vocabulary
- You may want a separate place (or color) for confusing homonyms
- Content area word walls can address the vocabulary specific to that content
- In the upper grades, students can be taught to manage the word wall(s)
- Punctuation wall? Synonym/Antonym walls?

Inquiry and Discovery

- Identify area of readiness, need or curiosity
- Collect, or have students collect, examples of the target language convention
 - Spelling
 - Grammar
 - Punctuation
- Explore and name features or "job" of the convention
- Chart student definition of the rule of usage

Isolated Practice

- Cloze
- Daily Language Review (<http://www.evan-moor.com/Product.aspx?SeriesID=35>)
- Guided self and peer editing of writing, looking specifically for recently taught conventions

Retrieval Practice

- Traditional tests' purpose is to assess whether a convention is learned or not
- Retrieval tests' purpose is to support recall and, eventually, internalization of learning
- Test soon after learning, and at repeated intervals over time
- Response to errors is crucial- they must be seen as information to guide further study and practice and not as failure to learn

Accountability in Independent Writing

- Everything up to now should lead to independent usage
- There should be several steps in the transfer from the very first explicit teaching of a convention to the expectation of independence
- A recently taught convention may be an editing strategy, then a drafting strategy, then a look-out strategy, then finally an internalized skill

Usage in the Writing Process

	September	October	November
Collecting			Spelling A
			Punctuation A
Drafting		Spelling A	Spelling B
		Punctuation A	Punctuation B
Editing	Spelling A	Spelling B	Spelling C
	Punctuation A	Punctuation B	Punctuation C

- ### Supporting Independence
- Co-create charts that reflect current study
 - Use student friendly wording
 - Charts should actively reflect new learning
 - Charts are for the students! If they are not using them, remove or replace them.
 - Create cumulative revision and editing checklists
 - Focus on fewer concepts per year
 - Focus on them deeply and hold students accountable
 - Hold students accountable in varied ways
 - Leave room for student choice, even with conventions

- ### Next Steps...
- What is one way your understanding of teaching written conventions was clarified such that your methods will be different in the coming year?
 - What is one area in which you would like more support or knowledge?
 - Was there anything today that stands out as particularly helpful or transformative to your understanding?
