

DEVELOPING STRATEGIC YOUNG WRITERS THROUGH GENRE INSTRUCTION

developing confidence in their knowledge as writers. Also, using those resources during the instructional day helps students learn how to make connections and transfer knowledge, which is not something that all students will be able to do alone. In the following sections, an explanation is provided for each of those components.

THE WRITING STRATEGY LADDER

The Writing Strategy Ladder represents the steps of the writing process. The Ladder consists of five steps: Plan, Draft, Evaluate to Revise, Edit, and Share (see Handout 2.1*). The steps of the Ladder remain the same for all writing genres. However, the specific resources (e.g., planning charts and evaluation criteria) differ because they always reflect the genre requirements. For instance, when working on story writing, the elements of the graphic organizer (GO) for planning refer to Characters, Time and Place (called *setting*), Problem, Actions to Solve the Problem, Solution, and Emotions. The Evaluation criteria connect to these elements, and additional linguistic-genre demands are added (e.g., Does the dialogue help the reader see the characters' personality traits? Does the description of characters' actions and use of adjectives help the reader better understand the characters' intentions?).

For each of the genres, it is important that the Writing Strategy Ladder is reviewed and that the specific resources used within each step are clearly explained. This is important for several reasons. First, this approach helps teachers to make connections across genres. For example, you may now refer to the elements of procedural writing and discuss how they differ from the elements on persuasive writing. They both have BME sections, but within each section there are different elements. Students may identify that for each step there is an explanation (most of the time) and that each reason is supported by evidence/examples. This review time allows for the information about genres and their purposes to be clarified. Second, teachers need to remind students that the Writing Strategy Ladder is a way for them to monitor their performance without relying on their teacher. Students need to understand that learning and success in achieving their goals are not dependent on their teacher but on their own efforts and their use of strategies. The goal is to support students' self-regulation and ability to monitor their progress. Finally, even though the Writing Strategy Ladder is represented in steps, the steps are not set in concrete; rather, they are recursive and the process can be applied flexibly. Therefore, if students do not have enough ideas for their GO, they should return to the generation of ideas/brainstorm step instead of continuing and making up information.

STEPS ON THE WRITING STRATEGY LADDER

Plan

Planning, the first step on the Writing Strategy Ladder, consists of three tasks: FTAAP, generating ideas, and GO. Let's look at each of them in turn.

*All handouts and forms appear at the ends of chapters.

FTAAP

FTAAP is a rhetorical task-analysis process that orients learners' attention and helps them to set goals and select strategies. The *F* in FTAAP stands for *form* (e.g., essay, paragraph, other); the *T* stands for *topic*; the first *A* for *audience*; the second *A* for *author*; and the *P* for *purpose*. Using FTAAP task analysis helps learners develop a thinking map to identify the writing purpose, the genre, and the genre's organizational elements. Once students have that knowledge, they can then proceed with generation and organization of ideas. Since the completion of FTAAP requires multiple rereadings of an assignment, it is important that you model the process. Also, once you have completed at least two genres, you can select two or more assignments and model for students how you analyze them to determine your goals by using FTAAP (Philippakos, 2018). Once students learn this task-analysis strategy as part of the Writing Strategy Ladder, you can show them how to use it for different subjects and for writing and reading assignments (Philippakos, 2018). In a later section, we explain how to apply the strategy in reading.

In using FTAAP, it is important that the *form* is identified early. The writing topic or assignment should be reread in order to examine if the assignment asks for a paragraph or an essay. If this information is not clarified, learners may spend unnecessary time and effort in composing a lengthy response, when they only need to complete a much shorter one. *T* stands for *topic*. The reader needs to reread the assignment and identify the phrases that specify what the topic is (e.g., whether there should be school on Saturday; the process of turning from a caterpillar into a butterfly). We suggest that you show students how to turn that information into a question so that they can use the question to store information into their memory (e.g., "What do I know about school?" ; "Do I want to be in school on a Saturday?"). The first *A* stands for *audience*. It is important that learners determine who the reader of their work is. This information can help them choose the vocabulary, sentence complexity, and tone for their work. For instance, if they are writing a letter to their principal, it would not be appropriate to begin by saying, "Hey, you!" The second *A* stands for *author*. The author is important because it establishes the point of view. During our development work some teachers suggested that the task analysis should include a second letter *P*, referring to *point of view*, but we decided to refer to this idea as *author* to go along with *audience*. Even in kindergarten, students can understand the importance of the relationship between author and audience (e.g., when they write to the principal as students). In addition, students may encounter the author's point of view in readings (e.g., the story of the three little pigs from the point of view of the wolf in *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka, or Little Red Riding Hood from the point of view of the wolf in *Honestly, Red Riding Hood Was Rotten* by Trisha Speed Shaskan). Therefore, even as early as kindergarten you may discuss with students the meaning of point of view. As students get older, you may then discuss the intent of the author and changes that take place in the writing once the point of view changes. For instance, when writing a fable, the author writes using third person, but students may be asked to write from the point of view of one of the characters, resulting in the use of first person. Such assignments can always connect with grammar instruction.

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P stands for *purpose*. The purpose connects to the Writing Purposes PIECE of Pie (explained later in the chapter; see Handout 2.4), which guides students in deciding whether the purpose is to Persuade, Inform, Entertain, or Convey Experience (PIECE). Once students determine what piece of the pie they are working on, they can consider which genre and what organizational elements to use. This is an important step, as it will lead students to decide what specific resources (elements, GOs) they will use in planning.

Generation of Ideas

Once the task is analyzed and writers know what genre to select, they begin to develop ideas. Generation of Ideas takes the form of *brainstorming* (not brain drizzling like drops of rain as our teachers shared), *reading*, and *note taking*. The process of developing ideas can be challenging for students, especially when they do not have much background information. The use of questioning based on genres can support them with idea generation. For example, when working on a story, they may ask questions using the following format: “Who is the character? His name is Bugs. What does he look like? What does he do? How does he do it? Who is with him? What is the problem? Why is it a problem? For whom?” In our work, we also engage students at this point in role play so they can consider the problems characters might encounter and the actions that they would take. When they work on persuasion writing, the questions will be different because they address different elements. For example: “Why should we have school on Saturday? What will we learn? Who will like this? Why shouldn’t we have school on Saturday?” Generation of Ideas is dependent on the genre. For instance, when working on persuasive writing, students will develop ideas in favor of and against the topic. When they work on story writing, the ideas will refer to characters, problems, and events; when they work on report writing, they will use information based on categories.

Graphic Organizer

Once the ideas are generated, the author selects ideas and places them into the GO. The GO reflects the elements of the genre and arranges them within the BME sections. Students learn that all types of writing and reading have a BME, but the BME elements differ depending on the writing purpose and the genre. For instance, when working on *procedural writing* (Philippakos, 2019; Traga Philippakos, Munsell, & Robinson, 2018), the Beginning has the elements of topic, purpose/importance, and materials/skills; the Middle has steps, explanations, and an evaluation; and the End has the restatement of the purpose/importance and a message to the reader. In *report writing*, the Beginning has the elements of topic and purpose/importance, the Middle contains the main ideas and evidence, and the End has a restatement of the purpose and a message to the reader. In essence, through this format we support students in internalizing the idea that their papers should have a BME structure that they can replicate when working with other types of writing. For example, if students are assigned to write in a genre that is new to them, such as writing a cause–effect paper, they can critically think about what elements

are needed, either on their own or with teacher support. In addition, using a GO formatted as a BME supports them as they transition into using outlines (we do not want students to rely on worksheets). These outlines can be used for several writing tasks across the curriculum and across the instructional day. As students become increasingly aware of the components of the GO, they can record the elements and use them both to plan their work and also later, as they advance to grades 3–5, as a way to take notes. As students read information, and after they complete the FTAAP, they can identify the BME sections within a given text and the elements for that genre (even when they do not appear in the BME order), understand the meanings, and determine the main ideas (Philippakos, 2018).

Draft

Once ideas are selected and organized, writers proceed with the *draft*. Since the main ideas are already organized for students to follow in the GO, now they need to generate sentences to express and elaborate on the ideas. In addition to the GO, sentence frames support presenting the ideas clearly. With younger writers and students who have limited linguistic backgrounds, we have found that using the sentence frames and the ideas from the GO to read a sentence out loud and hear it before writing it supported syntactic clarity. Therefore, when drafting, we suggest that teachers model and encourage students to “say it to hear it, write it, reread it, fix it if you need it” (Philippakos, 2019). Students say the sentence to hear it, change it orally before writing it, write it, and then reread it to confirm that it captures their intended meaning.

Evaluate to Revise

The next step on the Writing Strategy Ladder is *evaluate to revise*. We use this term, rather than just the term *revise*, to emphasize the importance of evaluation as a process of carefully rereading in meaning making and setting goals for revision. The main and first component of this step is rereading. Students reread in order to (1) self-evaluate and (2) engage in a peer review. Evaluation is based on rereading and applying the evaluation criteria (which reflect the elements and additional linguistic features of the genre) to identify areas that lack clarity and need revision. At this point, connection should be clearly made between the evaluation criteria and the genre’s organizational elements. During our design work, we were concerned that kindergarten students would not be able to apply the evaluation criteria to reread and evaluate their work. However, we found that when teachers consistently modeled this practice for the entire school year, students were able to self-evaluate and also meet with a partner to discuss their papers.

Edit

The next step of the Writing Strategy Ladder is to *edit*. Based on our work with grades 3–5, we applied the SCIPS process with grades K–2 (see Handouts 2.2 and 2.3) (Philippakos

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et al., 2015). SCIPS stands for *Spelling, Capitalization, Indentation, Punctuation, and Sentences*. For young, developing writers, we have found that it is best to explain the entire SCIPS as an editing process, but then focus on one of its specific components and share with students that this is a specific editing goal they will be addressing. Handout 2.2 is a form in which the writer can check whether each component of SCIPS was completed. Handout 2.3 provides a simple scoring rubric that students and their partners can use to assign a score to each of the SCIPS components. Students can then identify their editing goals (with the support of their teacher) and record them on their editing goals sheet (see Form 2.1). We suggest that at the beginning stages of editing, these goals should be classwide; therefore, you may use Handout 2.2 to avoid any confusion with evaluation to revise. Regarding sentence construction, we have found that the use of sentence frames and the opportunity to practice applying sentence-combining principles support students' editing skills (see Chapter 7). The instructional chapters do not include editing lessons since the goal is for teachers to draw specific editing goals from their students' needs.

We believe that editing is not only a whole-class goal but also could and should be individualized. Therefore, across grades K–2 you may wish to display a poster with classwide editing goals that you address through your whole-group instruction, but don't overlook the need for students to also have personal editing goals. Thus, if a student consistently writes using a lowercase *I*, writing using an uppercase *I* could be a personal editing goal. We include the editing form for you to use as a classroom poster and/or as part of individual students' folders (see Form 2.1). Students should be directed to first check their papers against the classwide and their own editing goals before meeting with the teacher at conference time.

Share

The last step of the Writing Strategy Ladder is to *share*. This is the time at which writers celebrate their work and share it with a larger audience. For instance, they may read their work in class or to students in other classes, or have a celebration at which stakeholders (e.g., parents, principals) are invited, and read their work with them and to them. We have found that when students are given the opportunity to read their work to a larger audience, their motivation to write and to reread and revise their papers increases. If they are given the time to prepare to share their papers, their reading fluency and expression will improve.

Technology can also support sharing and publishing efforts. The use of wikis and classroom websites can be one such avenue. Students may audio-record their work, and their papers and recordings could be hosted on classroom websites. In our work, we have extensively used Voicethread (see www.voicethread.com) for students to audio-record their work, upload their papers, share them with school audiences, and invite comments. We have also used Glogster (see www.glogster.com), which includes virtual posters that allow the uploading of papers, images, audio recordings, and video recordings and the inclusion of outside links. This work provides an introduction to semiotics and an understanding that meaning is not only derived from written words.

WRITING PURPOSES PIECE OF PIE

The acronym PIECE of Pie refers to the different writing purposes that authors have, including writing to Persuade, to Inform, or to Entertain or Convey Experience (NGA & CCSSO, 2010; National Assessment Governing Board, 2017). Using the PIECE acronym prompts the learner-writer to determine what section of the pie he or she will address and then consider what genres suited to that purpose reflect the needs of the assignment. Once this information is determined, the learner could consider the elements to proceed with planning, drafting, and evaluating to revise (see Handout 2.4). We find that PIECE of Pie can be applied both in writing and in reading to support students' understanding of genres.

Writing Application of PIECE of Pie

Prior to the beginning of each instructional chapter we ask that you review the PIECE of Pie and explicitly explain to students what PIECE you will instructionally address and what genre will be used (e.g., if you will be working on the purpose to Persuade, your genre will be opinion writing). By doing this you help students understand that there are different purposes in writing, and there are many different genres to express them (Philippakos, 2018). We ask that you develop a poster of the PIECE of Pie and that for each genre you teach you include the genre elements next to that writing purpose. This process will help visually address the commonalities and differences among genres and writing purposes. You may even include the sentence frames next to the charts with the elements.

Reading Application of PIECE of Pie

We encourage you to follow the same process when working with read-alouds to identify the authors' purpose and genre and point out the differences between genres (Philippakos et al., 2018). For this purpose, you may develop a table (see Table 2.1) that includes the following columns: author, title, purpose, genre, type (e.g., fiction vs. nonfiction), and

TABLE 2.1. Recording of Information during Read-Alouds, with Sample Information

Author	Title	Purpose	Genre	Type	Uniqueness
Aesop	<i>Zeus and Frogs</i>	Entertain	Fable	Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral • Animals talk like humans
Doreen Cronin	<i>Lick Clack Moo</i>	Entertain	Fantasy	Fiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals have human attributes
Seymour Simon	<i>Mars</i>	Inform	Report	Nonfiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categories of information • Real pictures

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uniqueness (e.g., a fable includes a moral). As we explained in Chapter 1, it is not possible to address all the potential genres suitable for each writing purpose; however, the connection with reading allows teachers to address more genres than can be taught in writing, and it helps show how students can transfer knowledge across genres. In this way, you can expand the repertoire of students' genre-knowledge base and their applications.

THE BE STRATEGIC! STRATEGY AND SELF-TALK

Be Strategic!

We acknowledge that writing is not an easy process or task, but a complicated one that requires complex cognitive processes, writing skills, language skills, social awareness, motivation, and task management. Through the use of strategies, we support students in managing the cognitive demands of writing; however, for them to be learners who can effectively apply strategies without feeling overwhelmed and ready to give up, it is important to address self-regulation (see Handout 2.5). Self-regulation is addressed through the explicit explanation of ways to set goals, monitor progress, and reflect on the strategies that helped students to complete the goals in order to set new ones.

Self-regulation is not a skill that can be captured in a lesson. Rather, it is a set of metacognitive strategies that teachers should make visible and apply across their curriculum by modeling self-regulation in their own behavior. For example, teachers might develop an agenda for a writing lesson and/or a plan for the school day, pointing out to students the specific learning and instructional goals they have as a community of learners. They can then cross out the information and activities as they complete them or reflect on the reasons they were not completed (e.g., due to a fire drill, they will need to complete the evaluate to revise step the next day). This approach will model progress monitoring for students and adjustment to initial goal setting.

In addition, you could engage the class in a discussion about how the strategies used for planning, drafting, evaluating to revise, and editing help students progress as learners. The discussions can take place at the end of every section (e.g., after the completion of planning) to specifically comment on the strategies used, how students found them helpful, and what they learned about themselves as learners. At the completion of each writing task, you can discuss with students the overall use of the strategies and how applying them helped them work out study goals (e.g., to remember the genre elements and steps of the Writing Strategy Ladder), determine what they need to use for their next paper to be better, and set goals for improvement. This process of reflection is necessary so that students can continuously set goals for learning and improving. In our work, we always share with students that “Practice makes progress,” and we encourage our young learners to develop a disposition of constant learning and improving.

This goal setting in second grade can also take the form of journal writing. Students may respond to writing prompts (see Appendix 3, list of Journal Entries) to comment on their progress, their use of strategies, their challenges, and their successes. For younger students, we have found that this process can be part of a classroom discussion

and classwide goal setting (e.g., “Our goal is to use our sentence frames when drafting to avoid missing elements or not sounding clear to our readers”). Goal statements can take the form of self-statements (developed by each learner) or classroom statements. The purpose of goal setting is to help learners identify and use strategies when they feel uncertain, when they want to give up, or even when they are successful.

Self-Talk

We decided to separately comment on the power of self-talk and positive talk that incorporates strategies for reaching a solution versus negative talk with a “shutdown” of effort. Self-regulation can address goals, practices, and behaviors. Research with struggling writers shows that negative talk and attitudes about themselves and their performance can gradually affect their beliefs about themselves as writers and their self-efficacy. During your modeling and your everyday instruction, you will know how to apply strategies to overcome challenges. You will be engaging in self-regulated talk. We have turned this strategy into a series of questions (see Form 2.2) that will be part of the self-talk that you and students complete and that connects with the Be Strategic! strategy. Self-talk can be a task for the entire class to discuss and complete as a group after your modeling and/or for individual students as they develop their own self-talk (see Form 2.2; also Chapter 3). It is important that comments that students record and you record as a class are reviewed across an instructional unit and across units. Students should be given the time and the opportunity to reflect on their previously made statements and revise or add to them. This reflection can connect with journal writing (at the student or classroom level) and can be a window into what works for students or what should be repeated or differentiated.

“One of my favorite stories to share is kind of a raw story. It starts out sad and poor, but it ends well. So we unfortunately had a bus incident; students exchanged harsh words coming in one morning. And students were upset, so typically what we do is let them kind of calm down first and then find out what happened. So we will interview each one and have them write down their statements, but honestly a lot of times I will read the statements and do a lot of interviews and then pull the video because it is so hard to tell what really happened. There were two girls, and they were writing down their statements— for a good 10 minutes. I figured this was also kind of therapeutic, in a sense; they could calm down. When they gave me their statements, I literally had to get up and walk out of my office to chuckle, because their statements were the most beautiful writing I had ever seen! Beginning, middle, and end. There were quotes, there were transition words. And I had the best image of how that argument happened. I knew who started the fight— each part of the fight from beginning, middle, to the end. I know that sounds like a weird piece of information to share, but I called Dr. Zoi and said, ‘We may fight but we can write.’ ”

—Mr. Freeman, principal

CLOSING THOUGHTS

MS. PICCARIO: “Remember, it is okay to get stuck; but it is not okay to quit. We all get stuck, and writing is not always easy. But it is not okay to quit. We do not quit. And even when we feel we cannot move on because it is getting difficult, we should think ‘Now we are learning. We are stretching our mental muscles and challenging ourselves.’ We should look at our strategies and check what we have used, what we can use if we have not used it; perhaps we had a very big goal, and we need to break it down a bit; perhaps we need to set as a goal to draft the Beginning of our paper today and not the entire task. This is what makes us strategic! That we are constantly reviewing and thinking about what we do and how we do it. And now, go writers!”

Our goal in using strategies is not to have students use more worksheets or complicated acronyms and mnemonics. It is also not to have students produce uniform, formulaic writing that reads and sounds the same in every subject. Our goal is to support young, emerging writers as they enter the world of written expression and develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence that enables them to identify what they are asked to do, draw or transfer information from what they know to respond or to develop a response, learn from the process, and set goals for improvement and growth. Learning is a continuous, not a static, process, which can be rewarding and lead to discovery. So, too, can writing. As students work, they may encounter challenging moments, which their strategies can help them overcome. As Ms. Piccario shared and as teachers who worked with us have adopted in their instruction, “It is okay to get stuck, but it is not okay to quit!” Challenges may exist and a learner may not yet be able to complete a task. However, a challenge is a sign of learning, and gradually through the use of strategies, and systematic reflection on progress with continuous goal setting, the ultimate goal of completing a challenging task will be successfully achieved!

HANDOUT 2.1

Writing Strategy Ladder



PLAN

- Think and decide
- **FTAAP**
- **IDEAS**
- Organize (**GO**)

DRAFT

- Think
- Use **GO** and Sentence Frames

EVALUATE TO REVISE

- Reread
- Use Evaluation Criteria
- Self-evaluate
- Peer review

EDIT

- Reread
- Check **SCIPS**

SHARE

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HANDOUT 2.2

SCIPS for Editing

SCIPS (YOU CANNOT SKIP THIS!)

1. Read your paper out loud to find your errors.
2. Use SCIPS and the *specific editing skills* you learned!

_____ **S**pelling: Are all words spelled correctly?

- Look for words that don't look "right." Say the sounds of the words to spell the word.
- Think of words with the same pattern. Think where you have seen that word.

_____ **C**apital letters: Are all words correctly capitalized (e.g., names, places)? Is there a capital letter at the beginning of all sentences?

_____ **I**ndentation: Are paragraphs indented? Can the reader tell?

_____ **P**unctuation: Are all periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and quotation marks used correctly?

_____ **S**entences: Are my sentences clear for the reader to understand my ideas?

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HANDOUT 2.3

SCIPS for Editing (Scoring Version)

Name: _____ Date: _____

SCIPS (YOU CANNOT SKIP THIS!)

1. Read your paper out loud to find your errors.

For Spelling, say the sounds of the words to spell them. Think of words with the same pattern. Think where you have seen that word. Think of syllables and syllable types when you work with longer words. Break the work in syllables and then spell the word. Reread and check when you finish.

2. Use SCIPS and the *specific editing skills* you learned!

0 = Not there

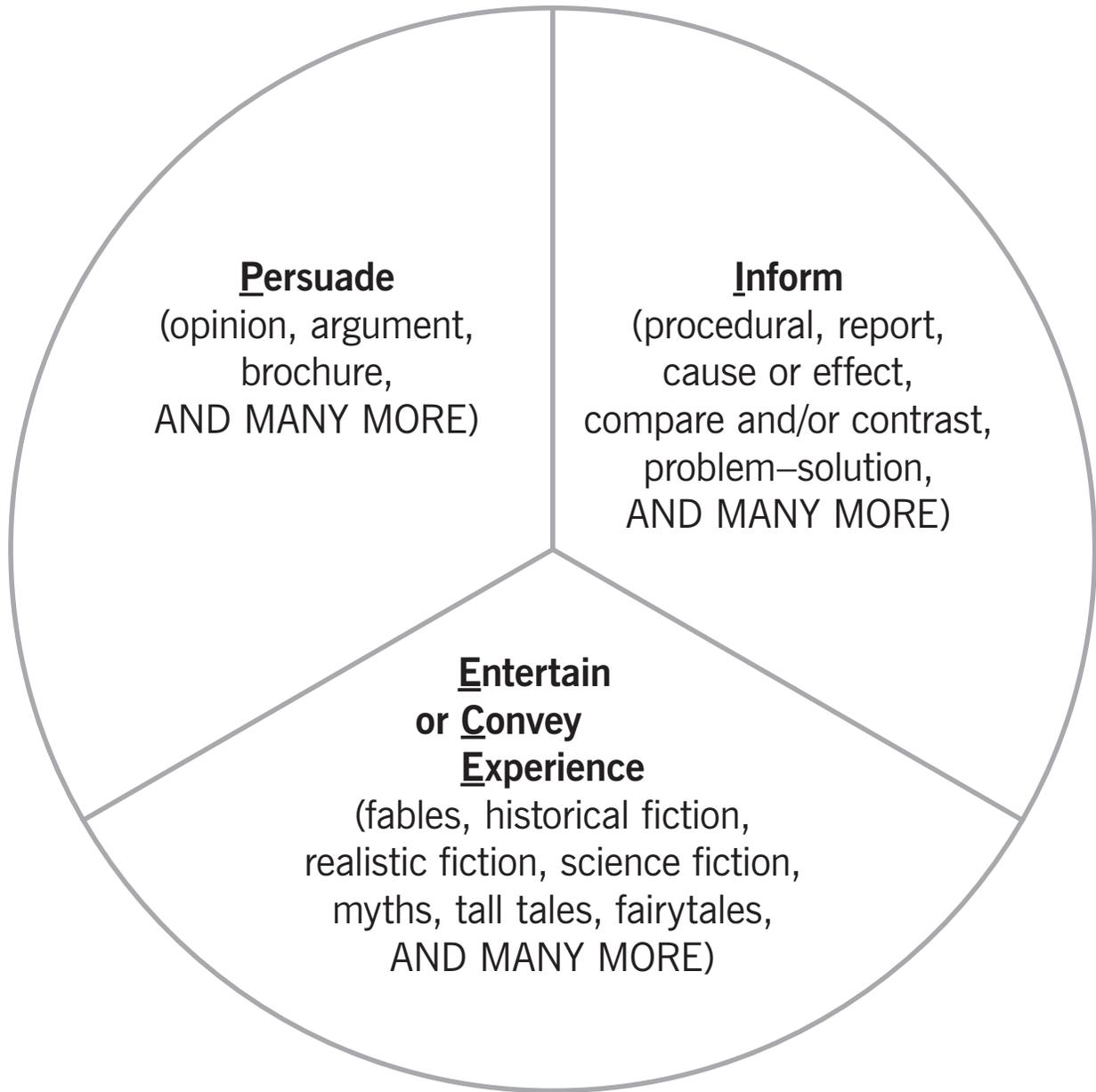
1 = Needs improvement (so-so)

2 = Great!

	0, 1, 2
Spelling: Are all words spelled correctly?	
Capital letters: Are words correctly capitalized (e.g., names, places). Is there a capital letter at the beginning of all sentences?	
Indentation: Are paragraphs indented? Can the reader tell?	
Punctuation: Are all periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and quotation marks used correctly?	
Sentences: Are my sentences clear for the reader to understand my ideas?	

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The Writing Purposes PIECE of Pie

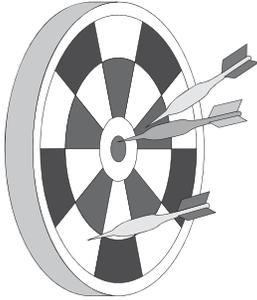


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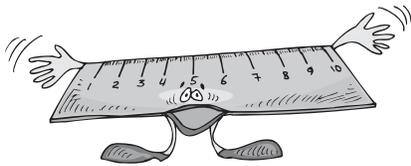
Be Strategic!

Be Strategic!



Goal Setting

- What am I supposed to do?
- How shall I work on this?
- What do I know to help me do it?



Progress Detector

- Where am I in the process?
- What have I done so far? What is next?



Motivation and Self-Reinforcement

- I know this is hard, but I can do it if I use _____.
- When I do this part, I can _____.
- I did a great job using _____.



Reflection

- How did I do in this task?
- Did the strategy help me reach my writing goals? How? If no, why not? What should be my next goals?
- What did I learn that I could use in another task?

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Self-Talk Recording Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

When I have trouble beginning my writing work, I may say:

When I have completed part of my work, feel lost, and can't think what to do next, I may say:

When I think that something is so hard and I want to give up, and I start thinking that I cannot go on, I could say:

When I completed something I had as a goal to complete or a smaller goal to complete and I want to celebrate and give kudos to myself, I could say:

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