



Helping Beginning Writers Find Success

An Evidence-Based Approach

This talk

Typically developing students **and** struggling writers

Evidence-based

Recent research

Practical

Children can struggle with writing for many reasons...

Learning disability

Developmental language disorder

ADHD

Emotional and behavioral disorder

Interrupted formal education

Unknown reasons



Also...
writing
can be
hard.



What skills do beginning writers need to succeed?



¹Ahmed et al., (2014); Berninger & Chanquoy (2012); Kim & Schatschneider (2017); Juel, Griffith & Gough (1984).

Discourse language



Writing

Ahmed et al., (2014); Berninger & Chanquoy (2012); Kim & Schatschneider (2017); Juel, Griffith & Gough (1984).

Discourse language



Handwriting



Writing

Ahmed et al., (2014); Berninger & Chanquoy (2012); Kim & Schatschneider (2017); Juel, Griffith & Gough (1984).

Discourse language



Handwriting



Spelling



Writing

Ahmed et al., (2014); Berninger & Chanquoy (2012); Kim & Schatschneider (2017); Juel, Griffith & Gough (1984)

How can we teach writing effectively in classes where students have a wide range of skill levels?

Discourse language



Handwriting



Spelling



Writing

Ahmed et al., (2014); Berninger & Chanquoy (2012); Kim & Schatschneider (2017); Juel, Griffith & Gough (1984)

What is a strategy?



First, I'll write the topic

Then the setting

Beginning

Middle

End

My feeling

Can we teach a writing strategy to children in Grade 1?

Experiment

Thanks to the London District Catholic School Board

9 teachers, 120 students

Is strategy instruction effective for Grade 1 students?

...for low, medium and high achieving writers?

“Stories About Me”

Stories about me



First, I'll write the topic

Then the setting

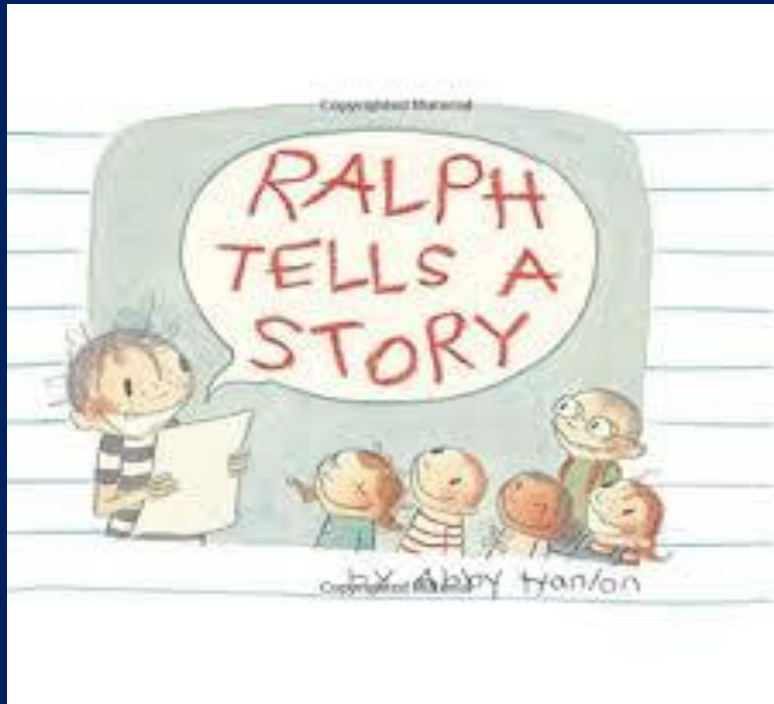
Beginning

Middle


End

My feeling

Making strategy instruction child-friendly



Using a picture book to teach about writing.

	Topic
	Setting
B	Beginning
M	Middle
E	End
	Feeling

Icons help beginning readers

A story has a topic
And a setting—where and when
A story has a beginning
And a middle
And an end
A story has a feeling too my friend

A rhyme to remember the strategy



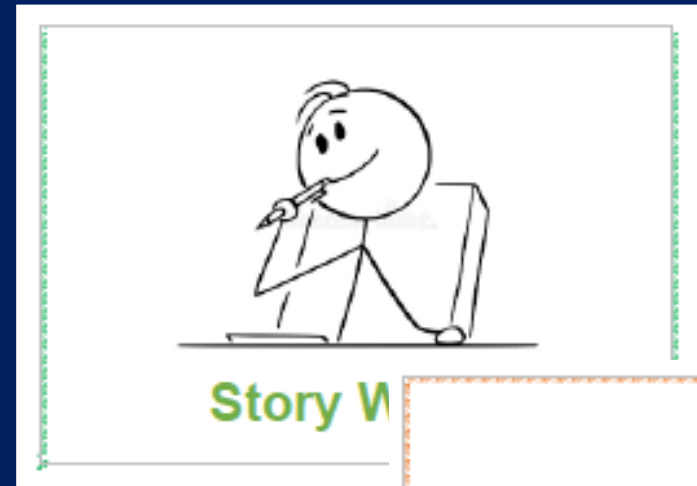
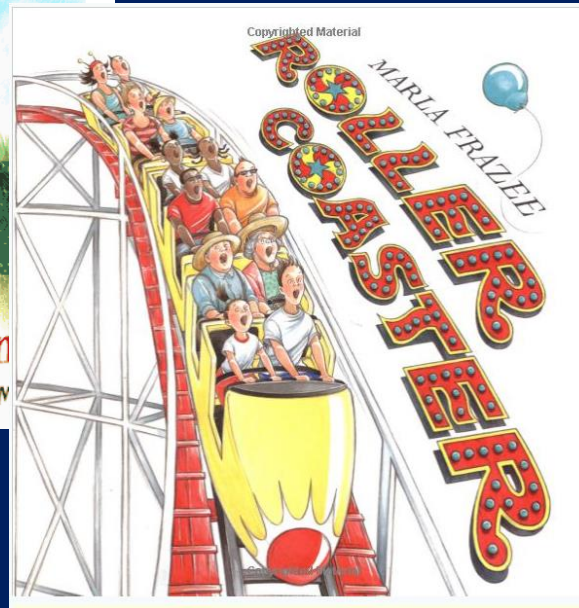
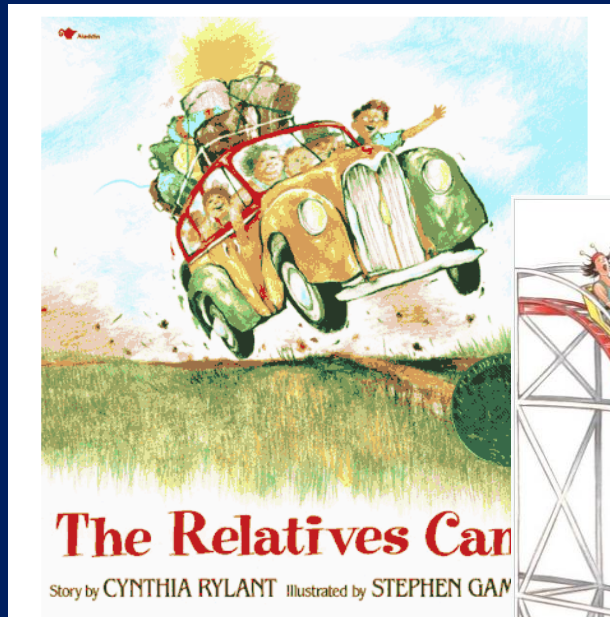
A fun way to practice the strategy



A fun way to pick topics

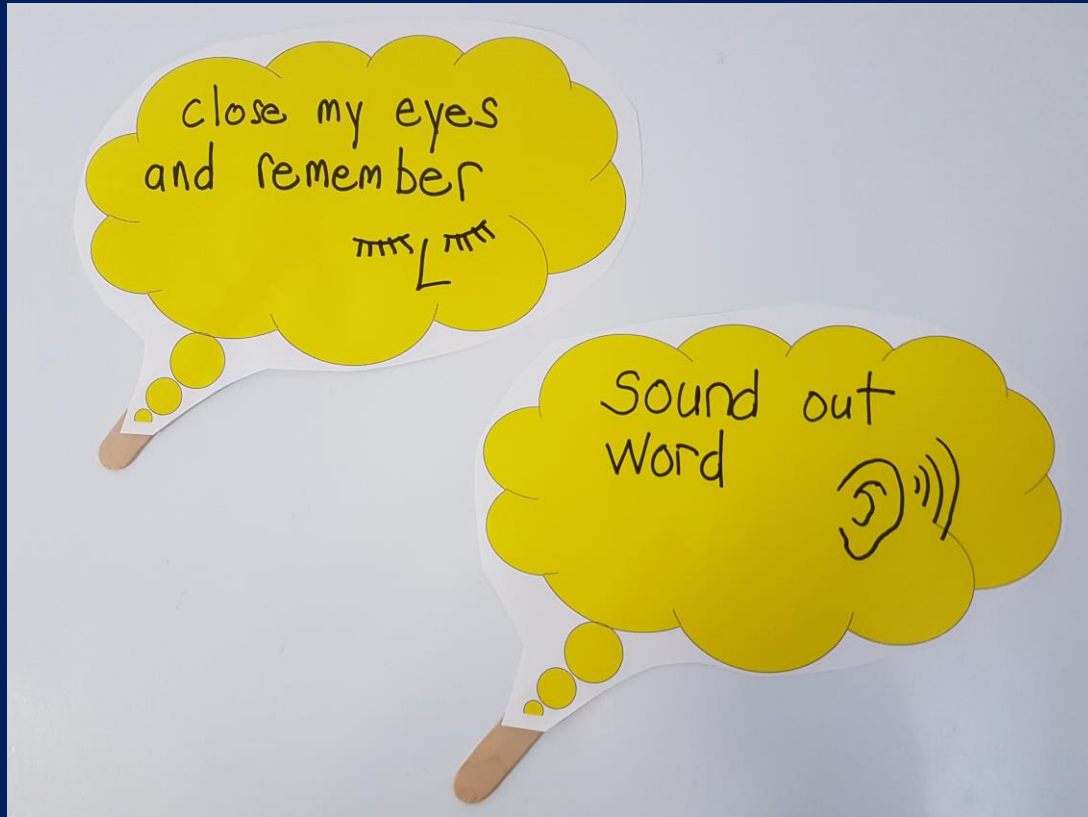


Kids coach the teacher

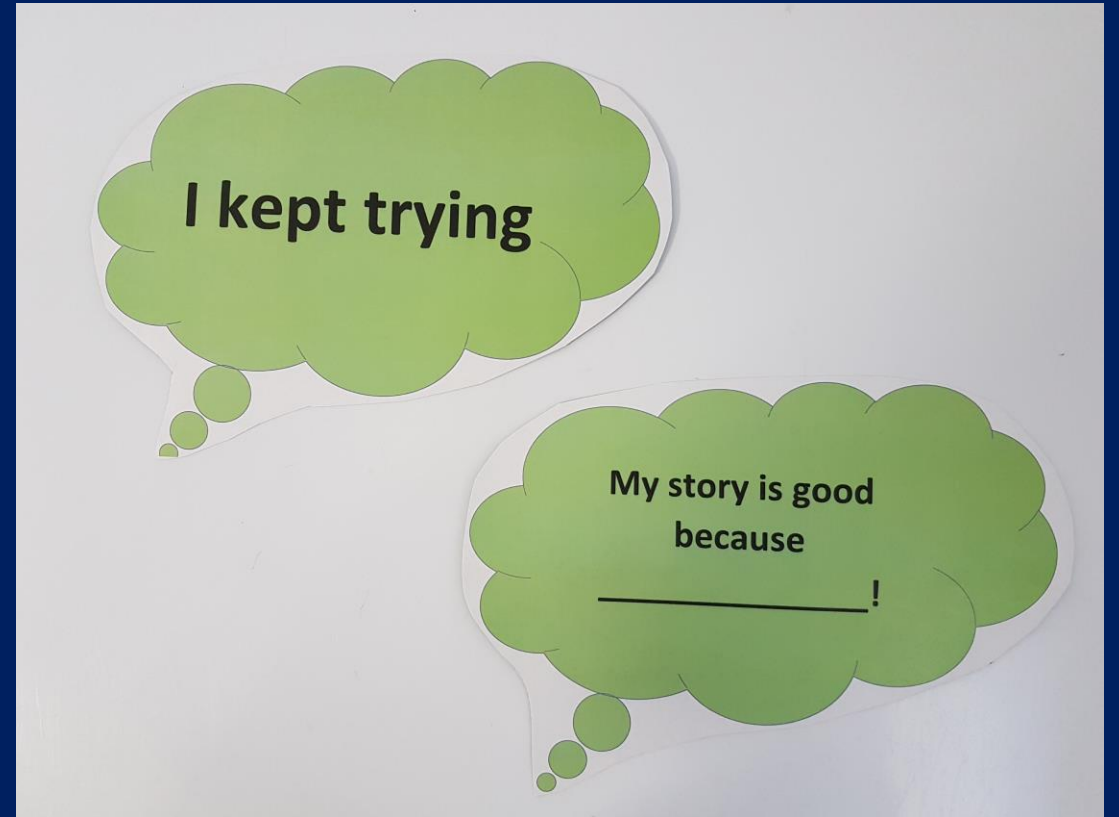


Read-alouds stimulate ideas for writing




Practicing the strategy by coaching a peer



Yellow thought bubbles remind kids how to cope with problems.



Green thought bubbles remind kids to reinforce themselves for good writing behaviours.

	Topic	
	Setting	
B	Beginning	✓
M	Middle	✓
E	End	
	Feeling	✓

Concrete materials help kids set goals for their learning.

A Time I Played Outside

it was sunie day
in the summer.
Me and dady
were going shopping
for stuff to build
a fort. wen
me and dady got
home we startid
build ing the fort.
we had rilly loo wood
wid. I was Esutid.

Handwritten text on lined paper with a decorative border of small sun icons on the right. The text is written in cursive and includes several misspellings. On the right side, there are red circular markers with icons: a house, the letter 'B', the letter 'M', the letter 'E', and a smiley face. Below the paper, there is a vertical strip with icons for Topic, Setting, Beginning, Middle, End, and Feeling, each with a corresponding circle next to it.

Concrete materials help kids to self-monitor (check) their writing

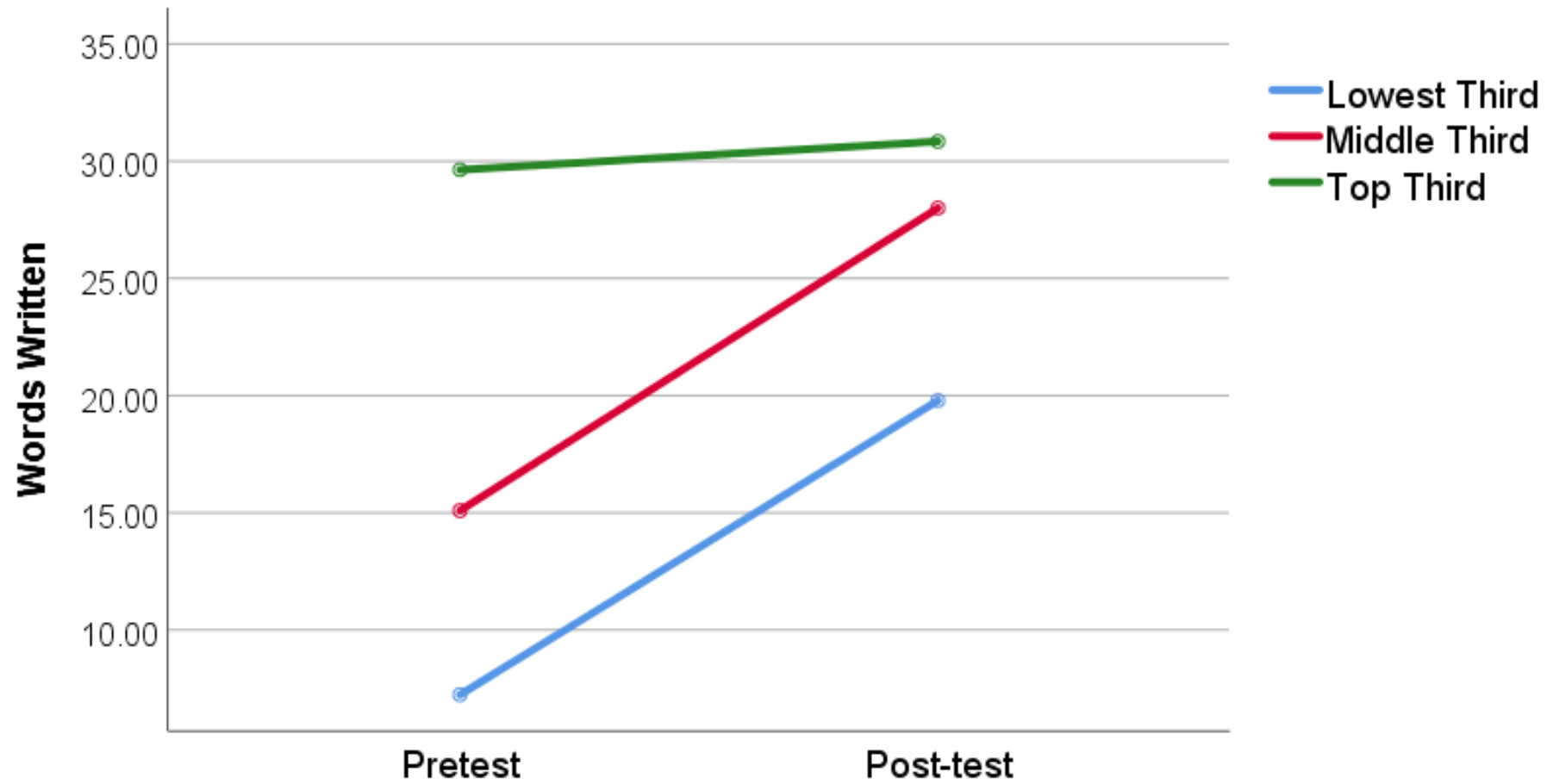
Before and after

A Time I Went to a Party

I wen to my ^{brother's} BABY
Brda^{birth day} i we ^{fun}
My BABY Brda was ^{fun} fono
I like my BABY Brda

A Time I Played Outside

I was five jirs Old and
i was ^{summer} somr frst play
in hte ^{pool} Puld. ^{Next} noxs i
slip ^{sleep} wis ^{with} my flori ^{floaty} sonah. ^{Somebody}
spla ^{splashed} my ^{me} tenh i was ^{wake up.} yf.
last i swim in hte ^{the} ^{pool} pol.
I feelt happy.



Evidence based classroom resources for strategy instruction

Developing Strategic Young Writers through Genre Instruction

Resources for Grades K-2



Zoi A. Philippakos
Charles A. MacArthur

POWERFUL Writing Strategies FOR ALL Students



Karen R. Harris
Steve Graham
Linda H. Mason
Barbara Friedlander

Teach handwriting to the point of fluency

Printing or cursive

80 experiments in K-12

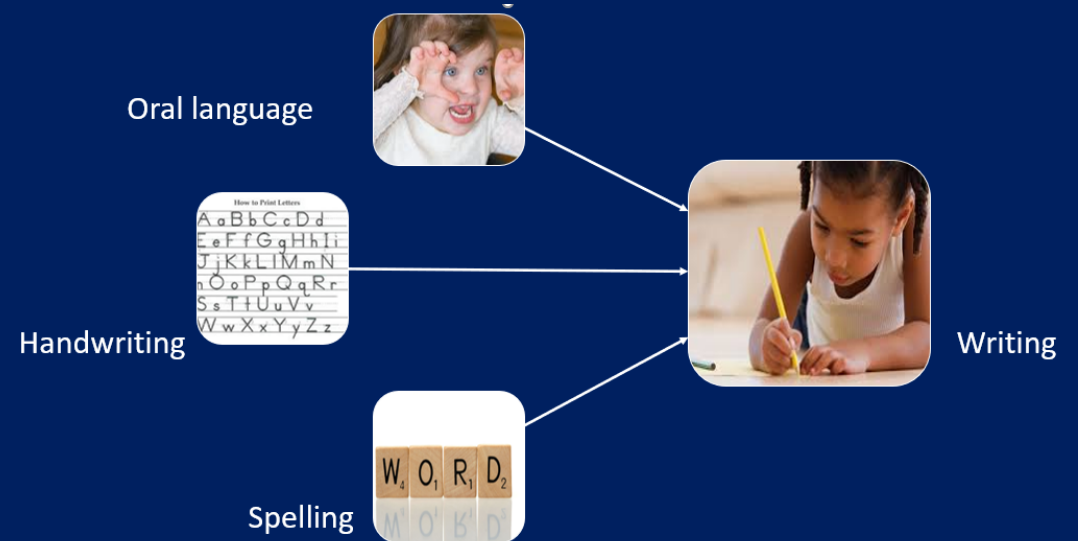
Result: gains in...

- fluency
- text length
- text quality



Summary: Teaching to a varied class

- Teach the skills that feed writing development
- Explicit
- Systematic
- Further issue: How to teach each of these effectively



¹ Ahmed et al., (2014); Berninger & Chanquoy (2000); Schatschneider (2017). Juel, Griffith & Gough (1988)

What can parents do to help?



Parents make a difference

Especially for younger children

But research is limited in quality and indirect

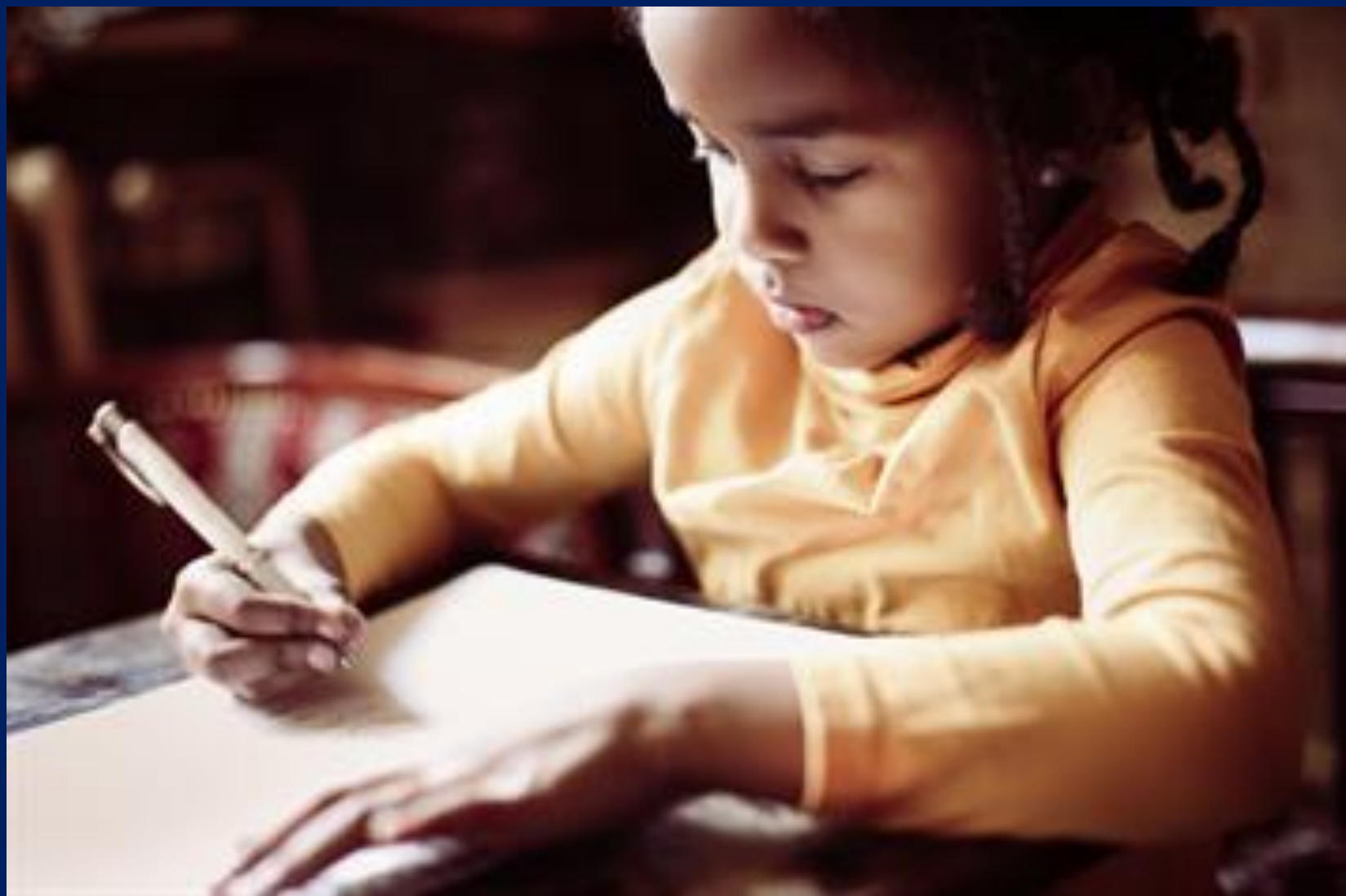
De la Rie et al., 2017; Reese et al., 2010; Van Steensel et al., 2012

Focus on the story

Comacho & Alves,
2017; Gates, Duke &
Marineau, 2011.



Help your child learn to print



Arrimada, Torrance & Fidalgo,
2018; Haney & Hill, 2004

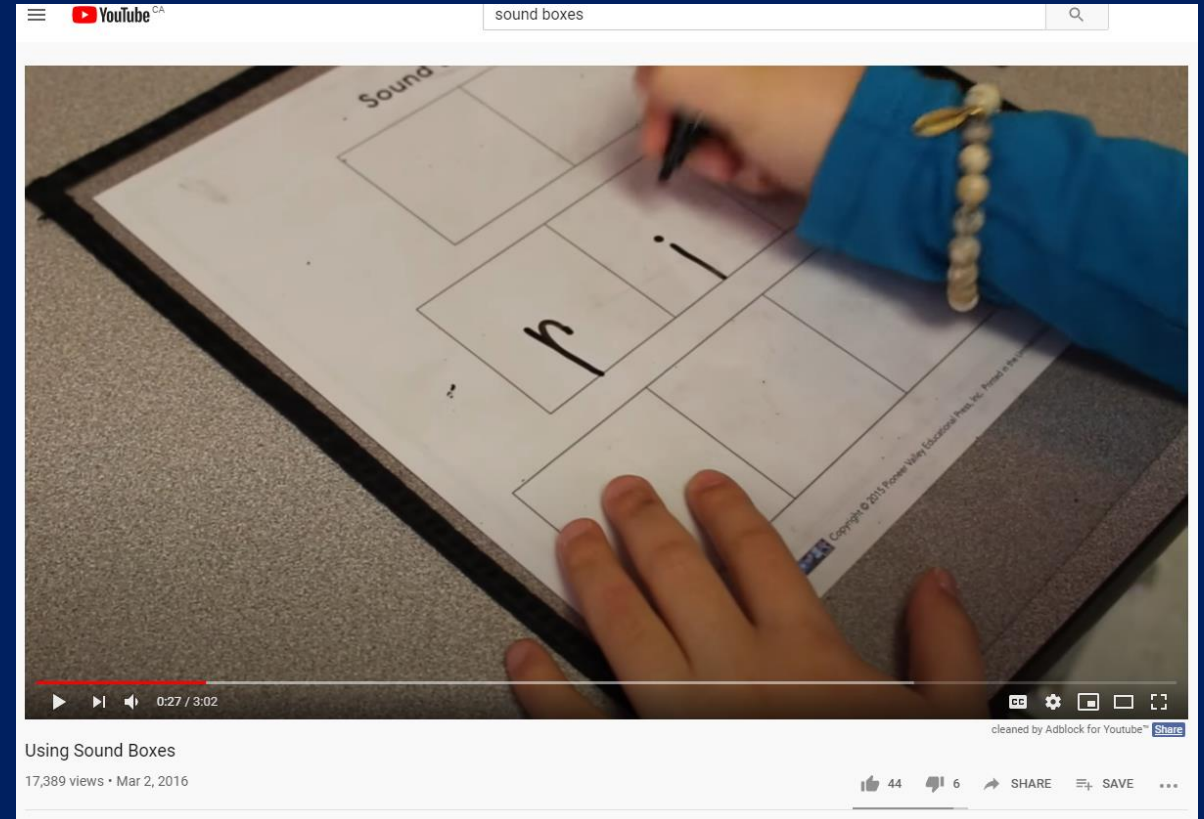
Help your child learn to spell

One technique...

- Child says word, stretching it out
- Listens for sounds
- Print letters for sounds

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up91XKEXFsM>

Arrimada, Torrance & Fidalgo,
2018; Haney & Hill, 2004





Start where your child is, go at their pace.

What's next?

Beyond the classroom

Future of writing education

Ontario Human Rights
Commission Right to Read Inquiry
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-read-public-inquiry-on-reading-disabilities>

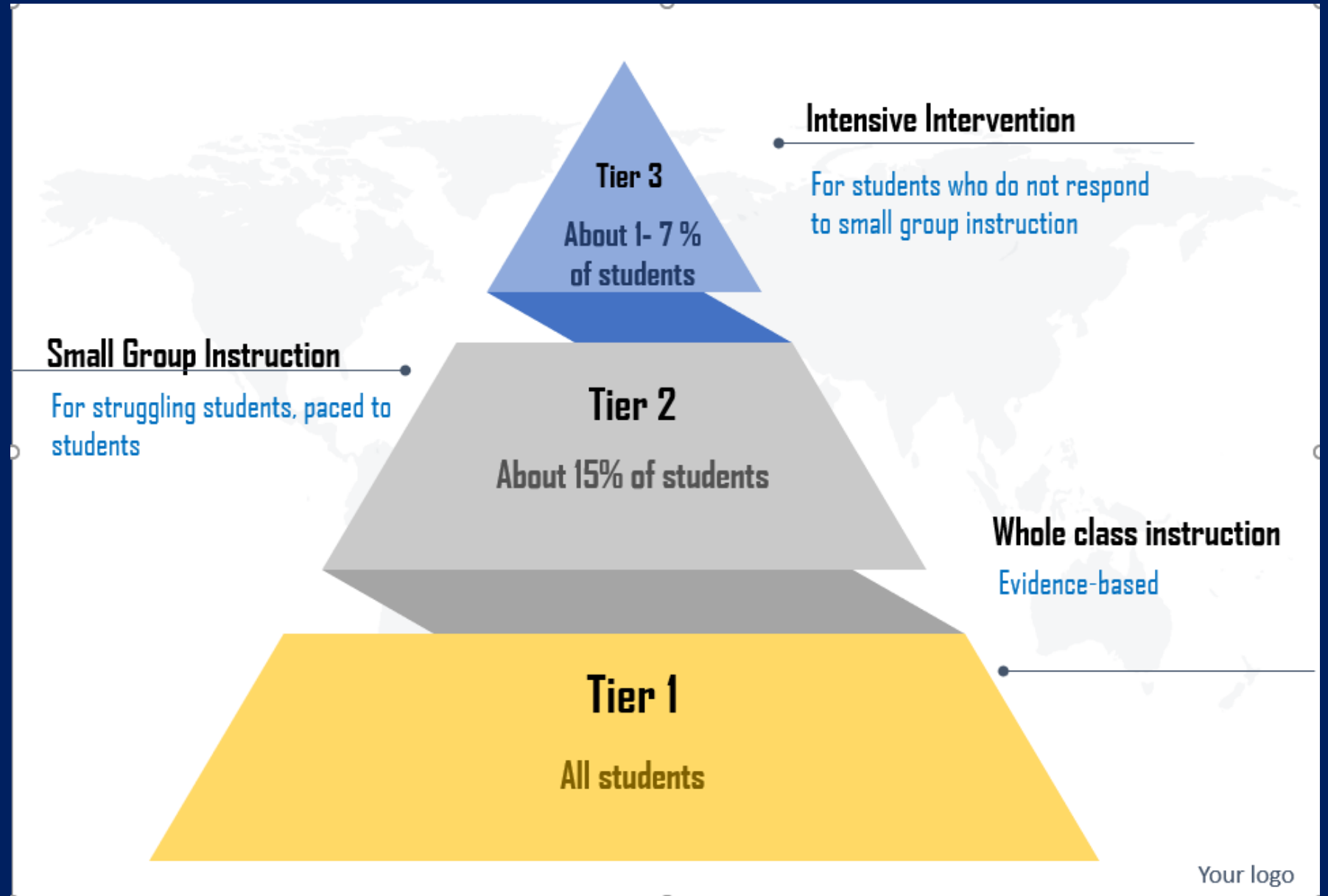
Evidence-based whole class
teaching

Early assessment

Early intervention



Response to intervention



Mason et al., 2019;
McMaster, et al.,
2012.

Conclusion

Challenges are numerous, but solutions are versatile.

For example, teaching writing strategies is effective for....

Typically developing kids (Tracy et al., 2009)

Kids with low and high income (Salas et al., 2020)

Kids with learning disabilities (Graham et al., 2003)

Struggling writers (Harris et al., 1999)

Kids with ADHD (Reid et al., 2006)

Kids with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (Lane et al., 2008)

Kids who are English Language Learners (Cuenca-Carlino et al., 2018)

Kids with autism spectrum disorders (Asaro-Sadler et al., 2014)

Effects sizes are medium to large

Parents and volunteers can significantly help beginning writers

...especially with training

Comacho & Alves 2017; Reese et al., 2010; Rogers & Graham, 2020.



Be optimistic!



Thanks to my research team!

- Jill Dombroski
- Christine Giese
- Ashley Bildfell
- Kristen Sha
- Serena Thompson