

## What Is Journaling? (And What Is it NOT?)

“Journal writing is an incredibly flexible instructional tool, useful across the entire curriculum. While often used as a class startup activity, it is used primarily to give students an opportunity to speculate on paper, confident that their ideas, observations, emotions, and writing will be accepted without criticism.”

[www.about.com](http://www.about.com) (Journals in the Classroom)

“The free-writing experience of journal writing is perhaps the most productive component in terms of language development and student interest in the early grades. When your students write in their journals *they write about what is important to them*”

- Bea Johnson (1999) *Never Too Early to Write: Adventures in the K-1 Writing Workshop*, p. 74

5

## What Is Journaling? (And What Is it NOT?)

- How does it differ from these ‘buzz words’??
- **Writing without standards**
  - Students write, and adults look at the *content* not features such as spelling or grammar
- **Remnant Books**
  - Things such as tickets and other tangible reminders of experiences; can be great source for topic setting!
- **Personal Experience Stories**
  - Students might be asked to write about their personal experiences, based on discussion or photos (typically at a high level than journal writing)

6

## What Is Journaling? (And What Is it NOT?)

- How does it differ from these ‘buzz words’??
- **Co-planned Sequenced Social Scripts**
  - Co-written by partner & student: goal = social communication
  - See Social Scripts webinar!!
  - <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/registration.tmpl>
- **About Me Books**
  - Typically written **for** a student, to support interest in reading, and to share with friends, so they have a shared focus, and learn more about the student

7

## So, For This Workshop, What Does ‘Journaling’ Mean?

- **Generative Writing**
  - In response to a student-chosen topic
- **Includes the Alphabet**
  - Students should use their AAC systems **to talk about the topic first**, but it is important to offer the alphabet **for the student to write their journal entry!**
  - For many students, this will start as ‘scribbling’
- **Partners Model and Give Feedback**
  - The goal is to eventually turn random scribble into meaningful writing

8

## Logistics of Journaling

- **Time:** Takes 5 – 15 Minutes, Typically 3 – 5 times a week
  - In response to a student-chosen topic
  - In response to adult chosen topic such as recent field trip or event
- **Where Does It Happen?**
  - Plan A: in the general ed classroom
  - Plan B: in the special ed classroom
  - Plan C: at home or in a tutoring session

## Logistics of Journaling

- **How Do Students talk about their topic?**
  - Using a robust AAC system
- **Light Tech**
  - PODD book, Core Vocab board
  - Student points and smart partner voices their communication
- **High Tech**
  - AAC on a communication device

10

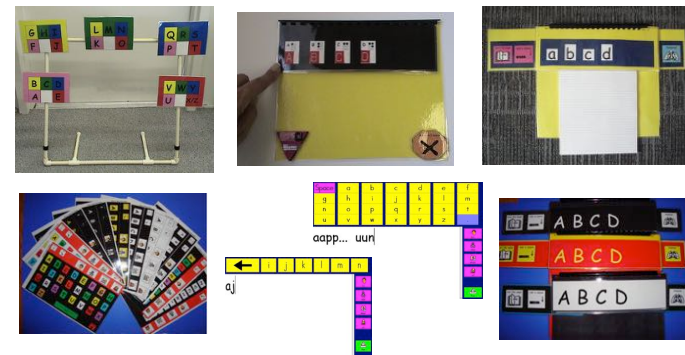
## Logistics of Journaling

- **How Do Students write their journal entry?**
- Access the Alphabet:**
  - Using an 'alternative pencil'
- **Light Tech**
  - Simple alphabets that include ALL of the letters
  - Student points and a partner writes down the letters
- **High Tech**
  - Alphabet on a communication device
  - Full alphabet on an app

11

### *Write with an Alternative Pencil!*

*Writing With Alternative Pencils CD, \$35, Center for Literacy & Disability Studies, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

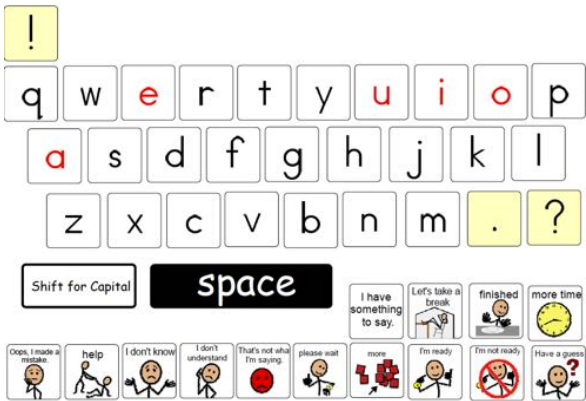


Alphabet Flipchart

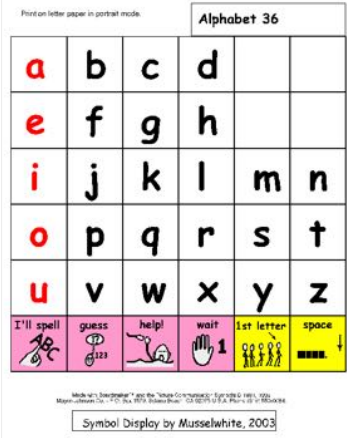


Developed by Dr. Gretchen Hanser

Qwerty AlphaBoard



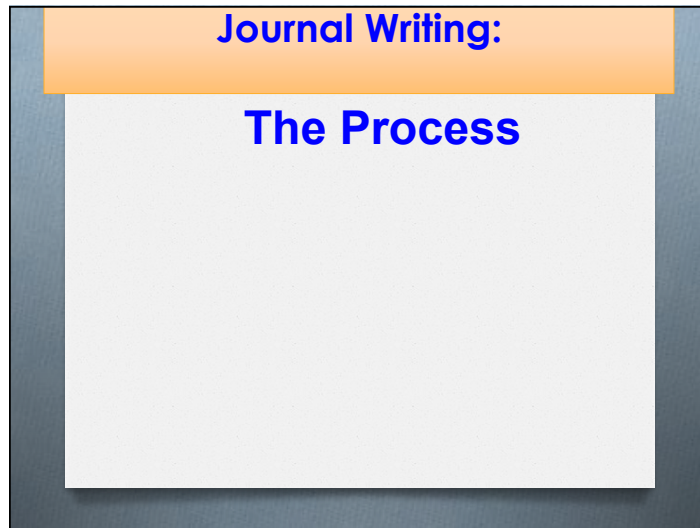
Alphabetic AlphaBoard



Pinterest: Accessing the Alphabet



Caroline Musselwhite



### Journal Writing: Before / During / After

- **BEFORE:** Set a **purpose** for writing – child directed or adult directed
- **DURING:** Use AAC to *talk* about the topic
- Use Alphabet to *write* in the journal
- **AFTER:** Give **informative feedback**
  - Scaffolds learning
  - Helps students make connections to meaning

### Journal Writing: Adult Models First

Before each lesson that the students are expected to write in their journal, they need to see an adult model journal writing in front of the class

- The adult models
  - 1) Setting a topic – selects a photo, uses AAC to tell topic, draws a picture
  - 2) Uses AAC system to say a sentence about the topic
  - 3) Uses Alphabet/Alternative Pencil to write that sentence

### Journal Writing: The adult models

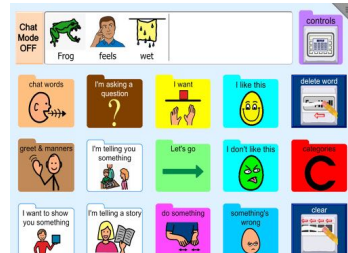
- The adult models
  - 1) Setting a topic – selecting a photo




None of those

## Journal Writing: The adult models

- The adult models
- 2) Using AAC system to say a sentence about the topic



## Journal Writing: The adult models

- The adult models
- 3) Using alphabet to write sentence



The frog feels wet!  
wet!  
cool!

## Journal Writing

- The child's turn
- 1) Setting a topic – selects a photo, uses AAC to tell topic, draws a picture
- 2) Uses AAC system to say a sentence about the topic
- 3) Uses Alphabet/Alternative Pencil to write that sentence

## Sample Goal: Topic Setting

Given daily opportunities to write about self-selected, personally meaningful topics using the appropriate assistive technologies, the student will independently choose a topic from his home/school log, photo journal, or other source on 4 out of 5 days with decreasing levels of prompting.

From: Center for Literacy & Disability Studies website / Deaf Blind Resources



## Journal Writing

The child:

1) Sets a topic

- selects a photo from a given selection
- Draws a picture
- Chooses an event from their Remnant Book to write about
- 'My Stories', News from home etc

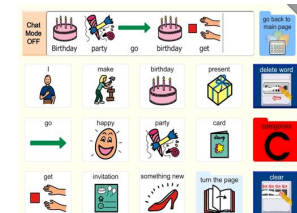


## Journal Writing

The child:

1) Uses his or her AAC to say something about the topic.  
This is talking time!

Adult does not write this down on child's journal yet (we do not want to give the child a model of writing to copy), he/she may write it on post it note etc to help them remember. In this example below, he child may confirm they are going to write, "Go to birthday party. Get fairy bread".



## Journal Writing

The child

3) Uses alphabet to write their sentence

This is the child's writing time. Adult may act as scribe.

During the writing period the adult may need to remind the child what they were writing.



bbpfbp nnn g ff

## Journal Writing

The Adult

3) Writes the sentence the child communicated with AAC.



bbpfbp nnn g ff



Go to birthday party. Get fairy bread.

Journal Writing

The Adult

3) Provides informative feedback







bbpfbp nnn g ff

Go to birthday party. Get fairybread.

Journal Writing

early scribbles!







H n u mn

Journal Writing

early scribbles!







H n u mn

Go to birthday party. Get fairy bread.

Journal Writing





Hnumn

Go to birthday party. Get fairy bread.

Happy birthday!

Yum! Mum nanna

(model these words in the AAC tool!)

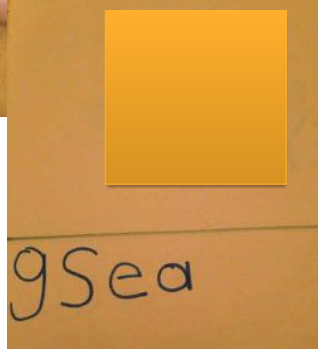


### Does Context Matter?

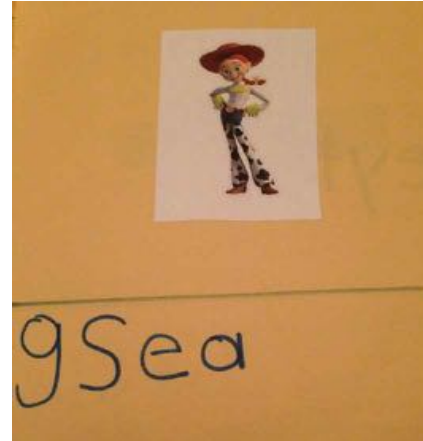


#### Kate, Age 5

- Started using alt pencil at age 4
- Angelman Syndrome
- Amazing progress



### Context MATTERS!!



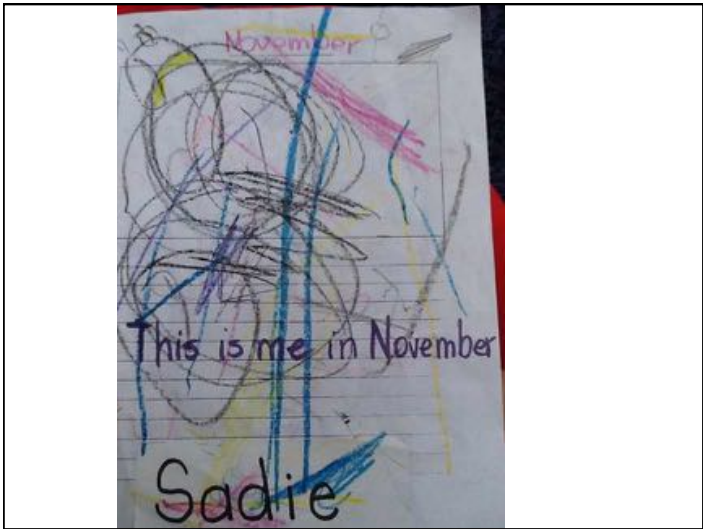
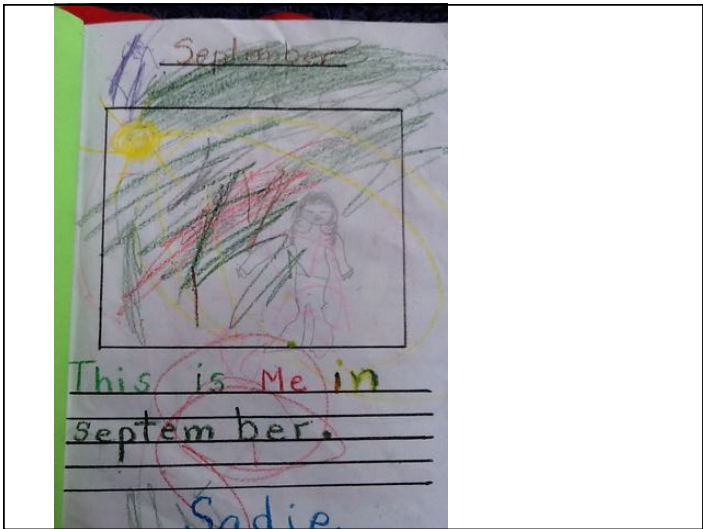
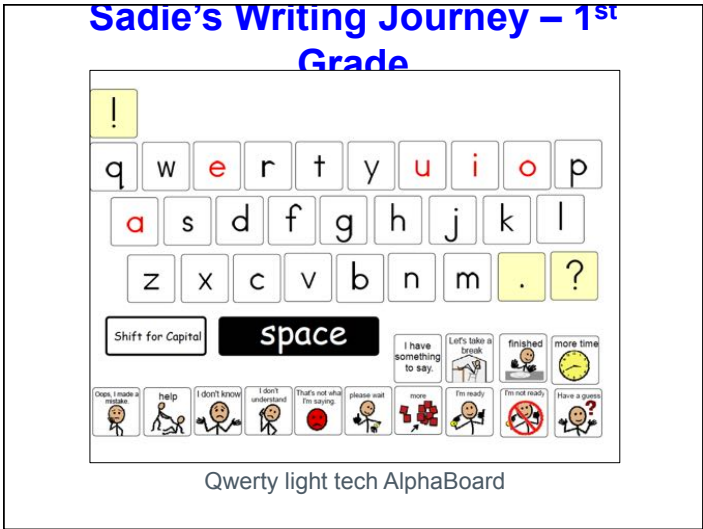
Adult's role to now write:

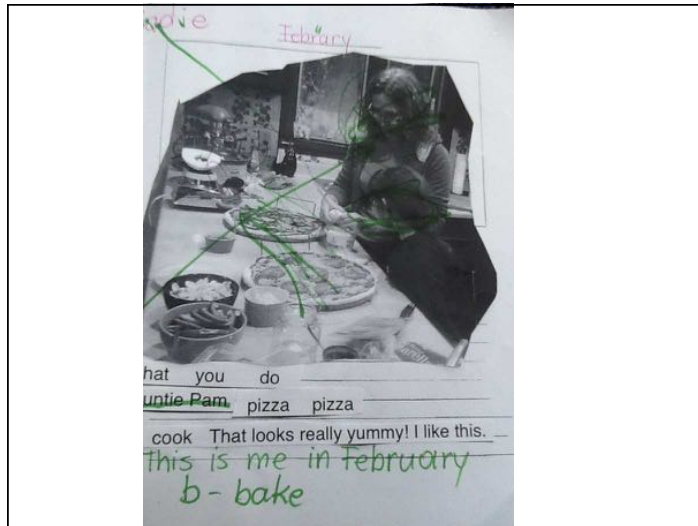
- Jessie "This is how Disney writes Jessie"

### Sadie's Writing Journey – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade



- Uses Proloquo2Go app
- Uses light tech alphabet
- Uses alphabet on her app





## Journal Writing

### Other types of journals

- Music journals: listen to different pieces of music, take photos of the students dancing, rocking out, being bored etc and make a class Music Journal out of each student's journal entry (thanks to Jane Farrall!)
- Book of the week journal: each student writes about the book of the week – their favourite part, favorite character, opinion etc and then turn the journal entries into a class book review journal
- Science Journal – review science experiments, collate journal entries
- 'Our Easter Holidays'

## Logistics of Journaling

- How Might This Change Across The Age Range?
  - Journaling can be done at ANY age
    - we can think about more savvy ways to motivate older students and adults
  - Facebook?
  - Instagram?
  - Fun apps such as *Pic Collage*?

43

## Talk then write? Write then talk?

What we have learned:

- We have found that when the child first uses their AAC to talk about what he is going to write it helps him think about what he is going to say and think about the letters/sounds/words he needs.
- Concerns re influencing a child's choice of letters once you know the topic
- Cognitive fatigue /motor fatigue when writing first (for early and emergent writers and communicators, particularly children who use alternative access methods) which means we miss out on them communicating about their topic.

### Supporting Beginning “Scribblers”

- \* **PLAN A: Attribute Meaning to Student's Attempts**
  - \* We do this **naturally** for typically developing children
  - \* Gives **meaning** to students' random attempts to build their cognitive understanding of actions.
  - \* Not always as natural for children with significant disabilities. Focus may be on extinguishing the external behavior.
- \* **Make links between writing & student experiences**

*Adapted from Gretchen Hanser*

### But What If . . . You Can't Think of Any Reasonable Feedback?

- \* No worries
- \* Just have fun picking a letter in their scribble and talking about it
- \* If there are a lot of letters, maybe you can 'steal' some letters and use them to write a word (idea from Karen Erickson, Director, Center for Literacy & Disability Studies)

### But What If . . . Student Just Picks a Photo, Points to One Letter, Then Wanders Off

- \* YAY!!
- \* This gives you 'bones to make soup with'
- \* And – if the student uses their AAC to TALK FIRST, maybe they will have more ideas!!

### But What If . . . Student Doesn't Participate

- \* This is tougher
- \* More modeling is needed
- \* PEERS modeling can have a HUGE impact!

### Possible Next Steps

- \* Share the handouts
- \* Share the webinar link
- \* Read FB posts
- \* Look for some of the practice key words on FB etc.
- \* Plan to attend/view next week's webinar!

**Thank You!**

*The ASF Communication Training Series  
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the Angelman Syndrome Foundation  
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The Foster Family Charitable Foundation,  
a family foundation established in Central  
California.*

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