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**Session 4:**  
**Teaching Students to Write for a  
Variety of Purposes**

*Teacher Professional Development Series:*  
*K-3 Writing*

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# Presenter Introduction

**Catasha Edwards**

Leader PD Specialist

Louisiana Department of Education

[Catasha.Edwards@la.gov](mailto:Catasha.Edwards@la.gov)

**Sarah Stohlman**

K-3 Literacy PD Specialist

Louisiana Department of Education

[Sarah.Stohlman@la.gov](mailto:Sarah.Stohlman@la.gov)





# Today's Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to explain how they will support students' in writing for a variety of purposes.



# What is Writing and How Do We Teach It?



- Writing is a complex process that requires students to manage many factors simultaneously - word choice, spelling, syntax, background information, and content knowledge.
- For students who are not yet at a point of encoding with sufficient automaticity (even if the encoding is inventive), or those with limited oral language skills, work with writing can (and should) begin orally, and should focus on responding to text - either by sharing ideas or responding to questions.

SOURCE: [The Writing Revolution](#)



# What is Writing and How Do We Teach It?

- In grades K-3, the focus of writing instruction - like reading instruction - should be on two key areas:
  - building students' capacity to encode with automaticity,
  - building their capacity to develop complex thoughts that they can communicate through writing once their encoding skills "catch up."



# SCARBOROUGH'S READING ROPE (2001)

## LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION

**BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**  
(facts, concepts, etc.)

**VOCABULARY**  
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

**LANGUAGE STRUCTURE**  
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

**VERBAL REASONING**  
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

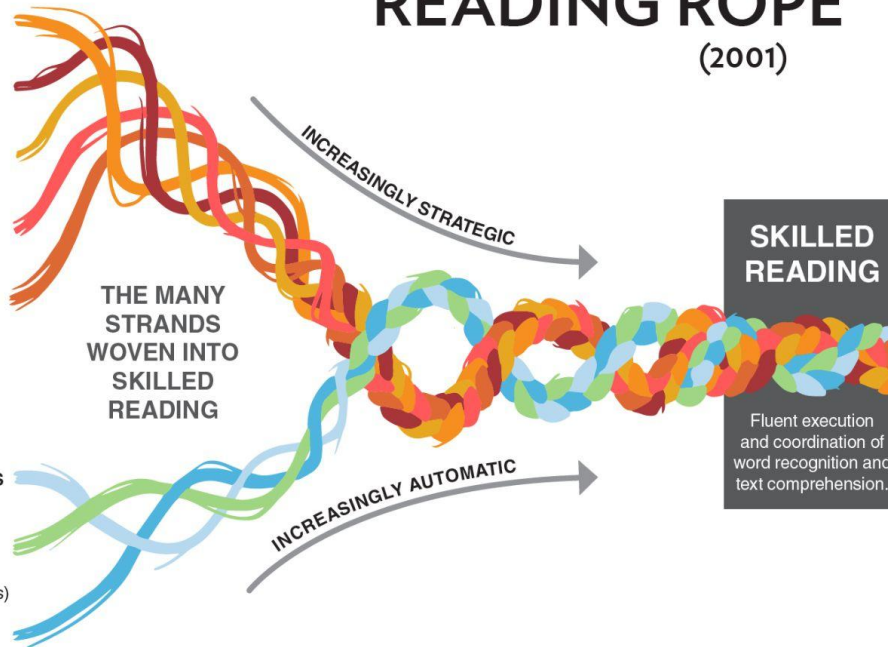
**LITERACY KNOWLEDGE**  
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

## WORD RECOGNITION

**PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS**  
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

**DECODING**  
(alphabetic principle,  
spelling–sound correspondences)

**SIGHT RECOGNITION**  
(of familiar words)





# Writing with Purpose



- As students begin writing, it's important for them to understand that writing has many different purposes - to share information, to share opinions, to explain ideas or processes, and to entertain.
- These different purposes are reflected in the Louisiana Student Standards for writing:

## **Text Types and Purposes**

1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
3. Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.



# Writing with Purpose

- Being able to identify the purpose for a particular type of writing is an important part of students' writing development, and this can easily start in the pre-writing phase.
- At the earliest levels, students can begin to understand when it's appropriate to communicate their opinions, when they should share information or explain, and when it's appropriate to be creative.
- This work can begin in the context of questions/answers about texts that you are reading.





# Writing with Purpose

- As students develop an understanding of the purpose of their writing, the focus can then turn to identifying key content to include.
- As their ability to communicate ideas with appropriate purpose grows, they can then develop more nuanced understandings of the components of the different genres of writing.
- *This work is embedded in the context of the knowledge-building curriculum that you are teaching.*





# Writing with Audience in Mind

- You must also develop students' ability to write for a particular audience.
- Depending on the audience, you will use different language/sentence structures, vocabulary, and levels of formality.
- This is something to reference at the earliest grade levels, but often their writing skills are not at a point where they can truly differentiate for different audiences until at least 2nd or 3rd grade.





# Bridge to Upper Elementary



14. Your friend thinks it is impossible for people and animals to live in the Arctic.

Write a letter to your friend explaining it is possible to live in the Arctic. Include information about how people and animals are able to survive in the cold. Use ideas and facts from **both** articles in your letter.

What is the purpose for this writing? What do your students need to understand in order to successfully respond to this prompt?



# Bridge to Upper Elementary

19. This story tells about Derrick's first camping trip.

Write Derrick's journal entry about this camping trip. Include information about how the characters responded to the events in the story as you write the journal entry.

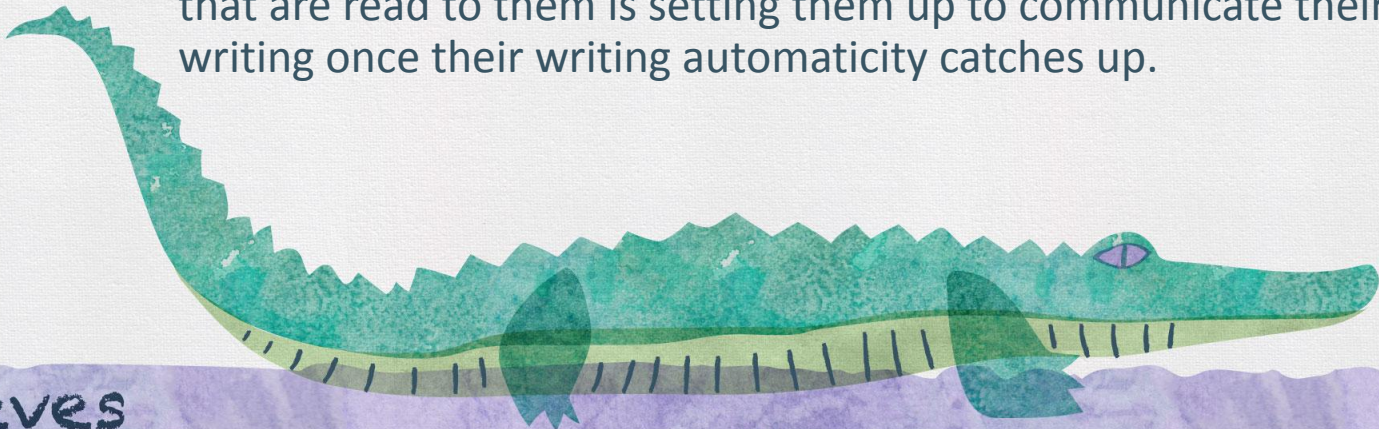


What is the purpose for this writing? What do your students need to understand in order to successfully respond to this prompt?



# Bridge to Upper Elementary

- Our youngest students can prepare for this work by thinking deeply about texts that are read to them - and as they grow in their reading fluency, texts that they read - and communicating their ideas orally and in writing.
- Providing them with opportunities to communicate their thinking - and pushing them to communicate appropriately, citing evidence from texts that are read to them is setting them up to communicate their thoughts in writing once their writing automaticity catches up.





# How do leaders support this work?

- When reviewing lesson plans, look for opportunities for students to write for a variety of purposes within a unit of study.
- Utilize vertical alignment to support writing conversations across grade bands and content areas.
- Use Backwards Design to allow for the identification and planning of writing for various purposes. The high-quality curriculum selected by your school system has writing embedded.
- Provide professional development opportunities on writing for *all* teachers.
- Cultivate a writing culture that views writing as an avenue to support and improve student reading across all content areas.







**Questions or Suggestions?**

**Contact Us:**

**[Catasha.Edwards@la.gov](mailto:Catasha.Edwards@la.gov)**

**[Sarah.Stohlman@la.gov](mailto:Sarah.Stohlman@la.gov)**