



Growing Students' Writing Complexity Over A Series of Lessons

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Reading Recovery Council of Michigan Institute 2024**



“The purpose of the writing component of the RR lesson is to learn how to write messages and stories, to be ready after a brief series of special lessons to blossom out and write bigger and better stories.”

~Change Over Time p. 24



Goals for Today's Session

- Understand theory
- Look at student writing samples and analyze them for sentence structure and writing vocabulary over time.
- Consider what can we do in our teaching to more effectively teach sentence and vocabulary complexity.

Theory: Reciprocity

Writing helps to build

“the sources of knowledge upon which the reader must draw,

processes needed to search for information in print,

the strategies used to combine or check information,

an awareness of how to construct messages.”

- ~ *Change Over Time*, p. 17



Theory: Oral Language

Children's oral language changes over time:

"continuing development and increasing precision in the use of the sound system, the vocabulary, *the sentence patterns and the rules for combining words and making them agree, and a growing richness in the way he puts meanings into words.*"

"The child begins to acquire a feeling for the kinds of language that he can expect to find in books."

~*Becoming Literate* p. 73



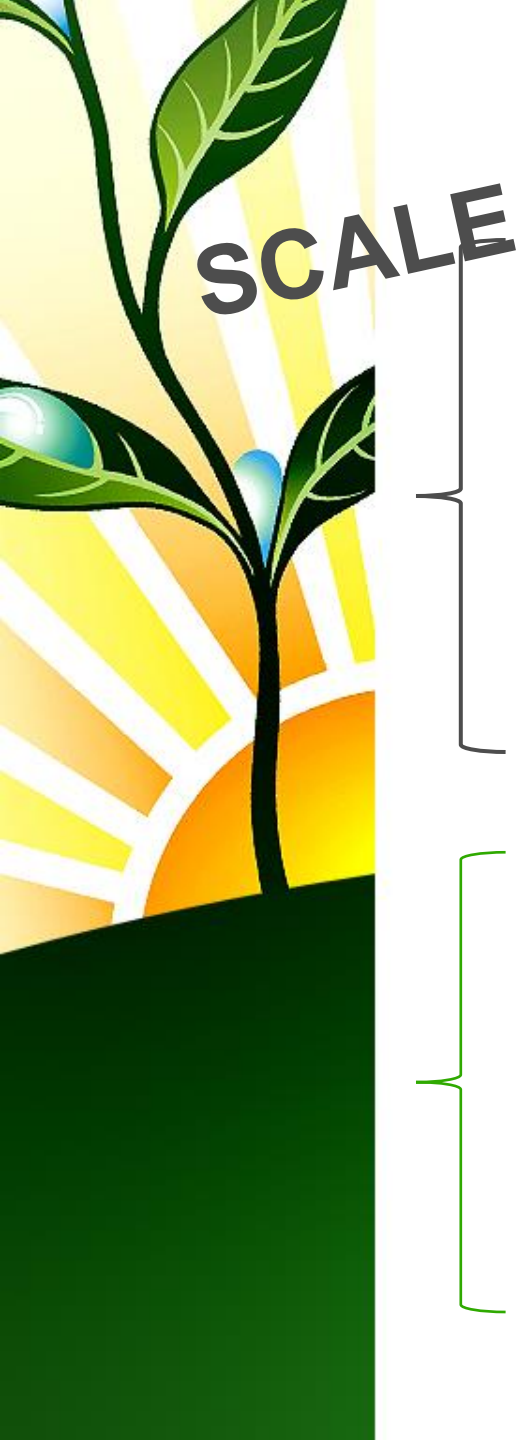
Theory: Sentence Complexity

- “A Reading Recovery teacher needs to become a good judge of **increasing complexity** in the daily writing.” ~LLDI p. 79.
- “By the time children complete their early intervention lessons they need to have fluent control of writing sentences and be well-prepared to produce stories **of greater length and quality** back to their classrooms.” ~*Change Over Time* p. 26



Theory: Writing Vocabulary

- “When children compose their messages for the day, they venture to write a wide range of words which give the learner a sense of the regularities and exceptions of English spellings. This learning about how words work in writing makes a great contribution to reading similar words in texts.” ~*Change Over Time* p. 23
- “The power to construct or generate unknown words comes from having a personal writing vocabulary...Knowing many words makes it easier to write stories because much of the text is written quickly, which frees the attention to go to new words that the child does have to work on. Knowing many different words enlarges one’s chances of getting to new words.” ~*Change Over Time* p. 24



Scale	Sentence Structure	Vocabulary
1	Sentence parts	Personal significance
2	Simple sentence with adjectives	Familiar common words
3	Simple sentence with adverb or prepositional phrases	Words in child's cultural context, simple words with endings
4	Interrogative or exclamatory simple sentence or simple declarative with dialogue	Tier 2 book language and proper nouns
5	Declarative compound with adjectives and/or adverbial and prepositional phrases	Tier 2 descriptive vocabulary and topic specific words
6	Interrogative or exclamatory compound, declarative compound with dialogue, or more than one sentence	Variety of Tier 2 vocabulary and may include emotive language



Complexity Examples

Emma

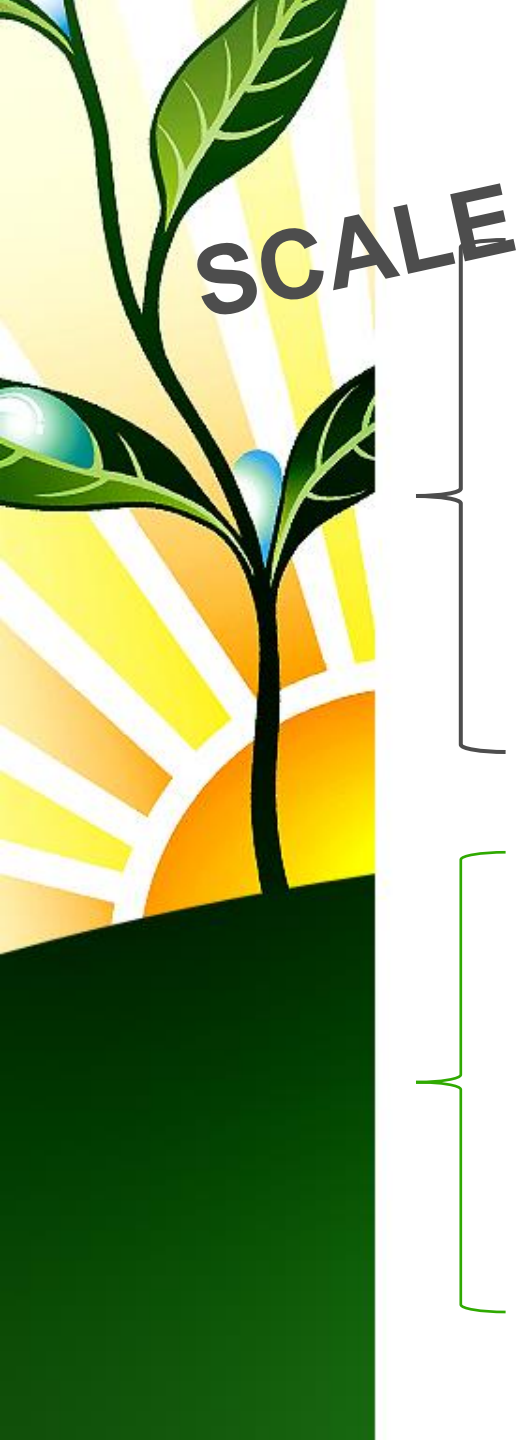
Lesson 11: I like to eat watermelon at parties.

Lesson 31: Spike was being mean to Danny but Danny ignored him.

Robert

Lesson 29: Jasper loves tuna fish.

Lesson 41: I love my dad but he went across the world to help other people.



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Complexity: Simple/Compound

- Simple sentence
 - Subject and verb = 1 independent clause
 - *I like pizza.*
 - *I will buy a horse.*
 - *Jasper loves tuna fish.*
- Compound sentence
 - 2 independent clauses with a conjunction
 - *Spike was being mean to Danny **but** Danny ignored him.*
 - *My dad broke his motorcycle **because** a lady crashed into him on purpose.*



Complexity Within a Sentence

- Adjectives
 - *I like **cheese** pizza.*
- Phrases – either adverbial or prepositional
 - *I like to play **with my cousins**.*
 - *I knocked the salt over **on accident**.*
 - *Liz howled **every single time** she wanted her way.*



Complexity Sentence Types

- Declarative – statement
 - *I like tuna fish.*
- Imperative – command
 - *Mom said, “Go to your room.”*
- Exclamatory – with strong emotion
 - *Bella got in big, big trouble!*
- Interrogative – question
 - *Do you like cheese pizza?*

Vocabulary Classification

Beck, McKeown & Kucan (2013)

Tier 1 words –

- Basic words such as mom, dog, cat

Tier 2 words –

- Expand on common words and may have multiple meanings such as mammal, ignored, howled, record/record

Tier 3 words –

- Technical words such as atmosphere

Vocabulary Changes

Rating
of a 2
or 3

Tier 1 words

play: plays, played, playing

like: likes, liked

Rating
4-6

Tier 2 words

book language

proper nouns, emotive language

ignored, howled



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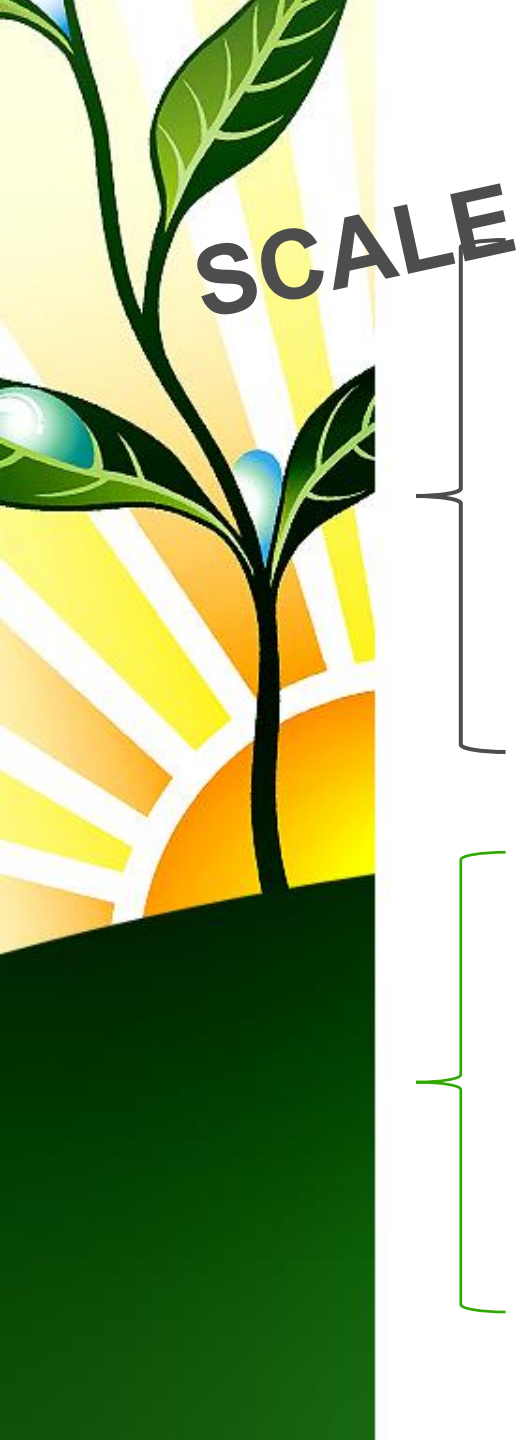
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SCALE Samples

- 
- I like to read the book Jasper the Fat Cat.
 - Today I'm going to be picked up from school at 2:00PM for my doctor appointment.



You score some!

We have valentine boxes and valentine cards.

- Sentence
- Vocabulary

Do stingrays eat shrimp?

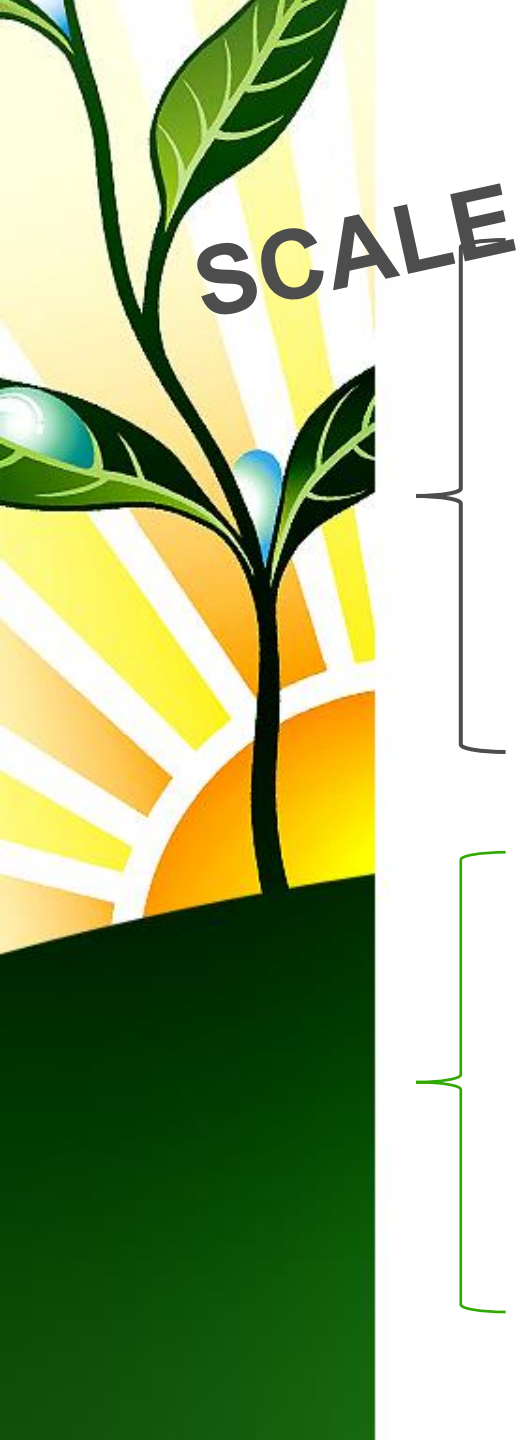
- Sentence
- Vocabulary

Turtles like light because it's warm. It gives them vitamins so their shell doesn't stop growing.

- Sentence
- Vocabulary

My cousin's birthday is tomorrow and I am bringing her a squishmellow.

- Sentence
- Vocabulary



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Teaching

“The message construction is a literacy task completed jointly with quality teaching interactions.”

~Change Over Time p. 23



Teaching

"There are no quick ways to extend language but the best available opportunity for the Reading Recovery teacher lies in the conversations she has with the child in and around his lessons. The books she chooses for the child to read provide other opportunities for extending language."
~LLDI p. 79.



Teaching for Complexity

Conversation!

Jamie Lipp (2023) The Composing Conversation

- Storytelling
- Powerful conversations
- Writing topics (LLDI p. 80)
- 10 lesson challenge



Teaching for Complexity

- The teacher must support the child's "attempts to initiate slightly more complex composing of stories at every encounter." ~LLDI p. 79.
 - Greet with enthusiasm (LLDI p. 81)
 - Later make suggestions for ideas or structures (LLDI p. 81)
 - Write down longest oral utterance and update often
 - Compare oral talk (ROL or utterance) to book language and written language



Teaching for Complexity

Teach different sentence types

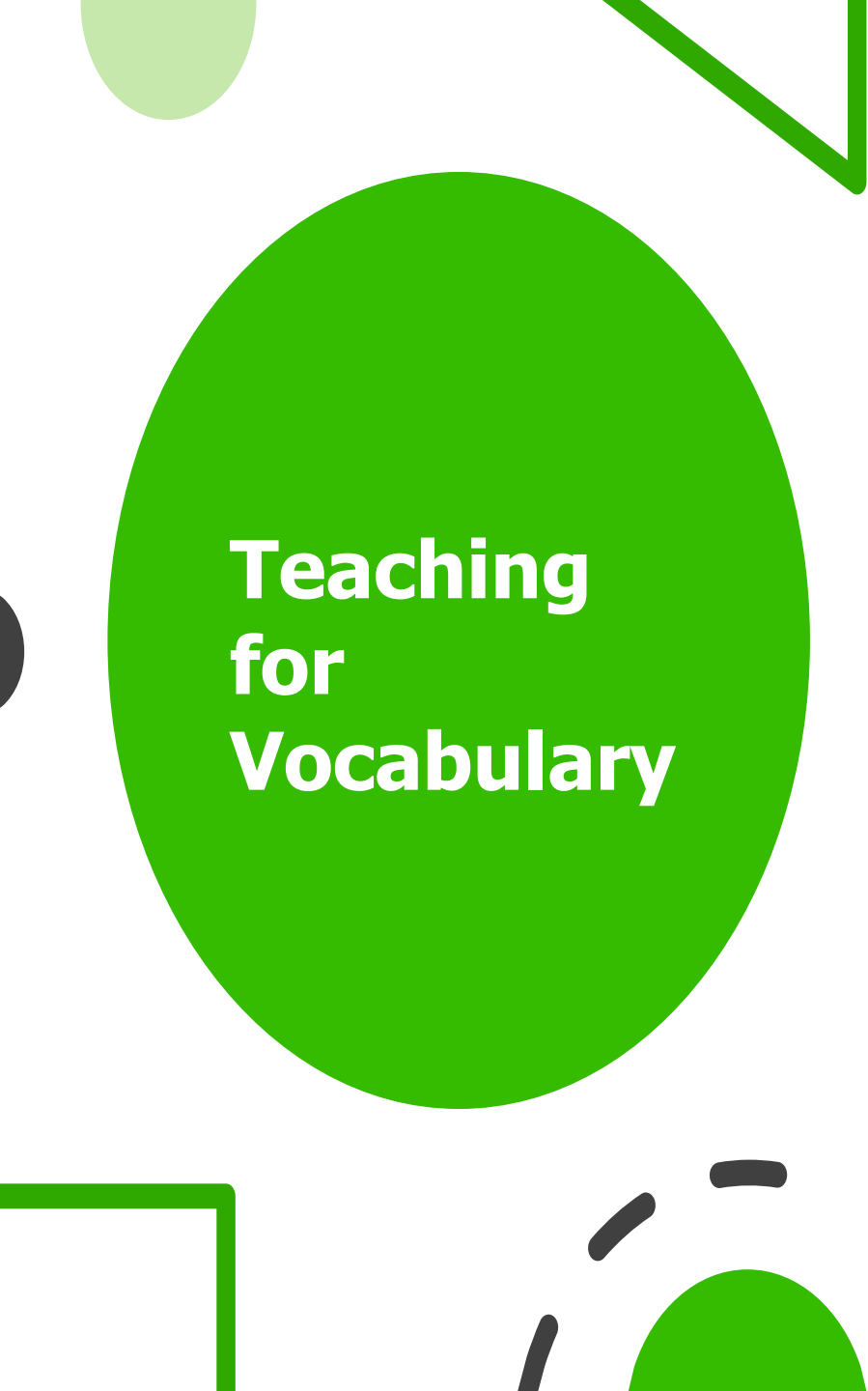
- Vary declarative, interrogative and exclamatory writing

Extend simple to compound sentences

- Jasper loves tuna fish **because** --.

Teach complexity within a sentence

- Jasper loves to eat tuna fish **every day**.
- “Jasper loves tuna fish,” **said Robert**.



Teaching for Vocabulary

- Writing vocabulary chart LLDI
p. 224 and 225
 - Writing quantity
 - Writing variety
- Using known to new
- Refresh and revisit



Teaching

Word selection (LLDI p. 89 and 90)

1. New word
2. Nearly correct
3. Used during hearing and recording sounds
4. Will be used often in writing
5. Connects known to bridge to new

Word prompting (LLDI p. 89)

- Write it here. And here.
- Check it carefully.
- Write it faster...and faster.



Teaching

“Every interaction in the daily writing segment is a teaching move – not a memory task, nor a practice attempt, nor an analysis of sounds, but carefully determined and astutely delivered teaching with a target that involves learning how to do something, do it better, do it faster, link it up to something, and prepare it for future independent use.” ~*Change Over Time* p. 31-32



References

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- Attribution Growing PowerPoint Template