

Strategy Matrix for Students with Learning Disabilities in Written Expression Organization of Needs with Useful Interventions

Disability: Jocelyn struggles with a Learning Disability in Written Expression and is 6th grade.

Student Strengths: Jocelyn is a creative, “out-of-the-box” thinker, an avid storyteller, loves acting in school plays, and participates regularly in verbal class discussions.

Common Disability Characteristic that Interfere with Learning	Evidence-based Strategies to Increase Students School Success
Academic (reading, writing, math, science, social studies)	
Jocelyn has trouble spelling commonly used words, which slows down her writing output.	<p><u>ClassWide Peer Tutoring Strategy (CWPT)</u> Participating in CWPT will help Jocelyn practice handwriting spelling words as she participates as the Tutee in her CWPT dyad. This strategy will help improve the sound-symbol connection for other spelling and reading Jocelyn works on. Students with a learning disability in written expression will benefit from handwriting practice because it increases their orthographic-motor automaticity and frees up higher level thinking and writing capability. The practice of spelling words each day in a peer-supported, game format will encourage Jocelyn to continue working on this challenging skill and improve overall learning.</p>
	<p><u>Spelling Mnemonics</u> Learning spelling mnemonics for words that Jocelyn commonly misspells will help her recall the letter breakdown as she writes. Mnemonics will help her create a link between something she knows and words she has trouble remembering how to spell and will help her retain the information for future use. Knowing how to spell words that occur often in writing will increase her writing automaticity, improving her output and confidence. For example, Jocelyn commonly misspells the word “because” in her writing and could learn the sentence “Big Elephants Can Always Understand Small Elephants” to help her spell. However, Jocelyn is very creative and might enjoy making her own mnemonics.</p>
Jocelyn has difficulty writing multiple sentences for written assignments, and properly sequencing the sentences she is able to write.	<p><u>Journaling</u> Journaling will allow Jocelyn to practice her handwriting while writing about authentic life experiences, encouraging engagement. Handwriting practice that takes place during journaling is important for improving her writing automaticity to make writing more fluent. Journaling will foster Jocelyn’s metacognitive skills because it will enable her to review her own writing for patterns in her own thinking. She can examine what areas she has strengths and what areas she has room for improvement, such as how to create a sequenced story with a beginning, middle and end. Journaling is a personal, shielded strategy where Jocelyn can tap into her creativity and practice different types of writing without the pressure of a graded assignment. In class, journals can be used as a pre-writing tool to help generate more ideas to write about later, and Jocelyn can see what strategies in her journal help her most with her assignments.</p>
	<p><u>Graphic Organizers</u> Using a graphic organizer, such as a Hamburger paragraph outline, will allow Jocelyn to take time to brainstorm and organize her ideas into topic sentence, supporting details and a conclusion before diving into a writing assignment. Using a graphic organizer such as a Hamburger Paragraph Graphic Organizer will also help Jocelyn from becoming frustrated with a large writing project at its onset if she is overwhelmed about how to place her thoughts in logical order.</p>

	<p>Graphic organizers will provide Jocelyn with an outline to organize her thoughts, so more ideas can be recalled and written down.</p> <p>Graphic organizers will help with her output and her sentence sequencing.</p>
Social / School Skills	
<p>Jocelyn can have a hard time socializing with other students in class because of low self-esteem.</p>	<p><u>PALS (Peer Assisted Learning Strategies)</u> Participating in PALS, a type of class-wide tutoring approach, during subjects like math and reading will allow Jocelyn to be part of a pair with a classmate pre-determined by the teacher. This pairing will provide her with a compatible partner that is patient with Jocelyn as she writes and completes work and can encourage her learning. The collaborative approach of PALS will help create a supportive atmosphere to help Jocelyn feel more comfortable with her peers and boost her self-esteem, giving her confidence to socialize more with classmates.</p> <p><u>Academic Games</u> Games in the classroom will help Jocelyn feel like a member of her peer group, especially if the game allows her the opportunity to be on a team with classmates, not just as an individual competitor, or if the game is not always based on written answers. Games such as a 1-Minute Class Debate will allow Jocelyn to show her peers her strength of verbal communication and build her confidence and self-esteem. Games will allow structured socializing between Jocelyn and her classmates and act as a building block for more socialization.</p>
<p>Completing group projects with classmates can be difficult and unproductive due to Jocelyn's frustration with her writing abilities.</p>	<p><u>Cooperative Learning Roles</u> Formal Cooperative Learning can provide Jocelyn the opportunity to be in a role that shows her classmates her strengths of creativity and oral communication, such as the Presenter, and also to learn in a first-hand, peer-based way the successful writing techniques used by classmates in areas of written expression. During Cooperative Learning, Jocelyn and her group will be actively working toward the same goal but exercising different roles within the group. Working this way promotes meaningful engagement with the task she is working on and allows Jocelyn to focus on her strengths not her deficits.</p> <p><u>Drama-Based Pedagogy</u> Jocelyn will benefit from participating in this alternative, creative instructional approach to learning because of this strategy's active engagement and inclusive process. Jocelyn will have the opportunity to take part in this whole class activity that won't pressure her to write in a peer environment and will allow Jocelyn to learn concepts in a way where she can actively contribute and learn. This creative approach to learning will tap into Jocelyn's strengths, such as presenting a poem or acting out a historical event and will also allow Jocelyn to write at times when she feels comfortable not forced.</p>
Behavior / Organization	
<p>Jocelyn won't complete the majority of writing assignments because of fear of failure.</p>	<p><u>Positive Self Talk</u> Jocelyn will benefit from creating a list of positive self-talk statements such as "Writing and expressing myself on paper is really hard but I'm going to keep trying," and then changing her negative self-talk into positive self-assured talk. Jocelyn will also benefit from frequent check ins with her teacher to review ways to continue to work on her growth mindset and to stress the importance of being consistent with positive self-talk to combat fear of failure. Positive self-talk will increase Jocelyn's self-confidence and chances of being able to complete her assignments by helping remove this negative barrier.</p>

	<p><u>Choice Boards and Menus</u> Providing alternative paths for the class to complete an assignment based off a central topic will allow Jocelyn to choose how she will complete the assignment. Creating options will increase her willingness to engage with the task and allow her the flexibility to choose the activity that best suits her learning preferences. Jocelyn will have a sense of autonomy and control over the way she chooses to demonstrate her knowledge and complete an assignment, and therefore a greater intake of knowledge. Having a Choice Board will also help Jocelyn feel like part of the class.</p>
<p>Jocelyn acts out in class frequently when faced with certain assignments that include writing.</p>	<p><u>Precorrection</u> Jocelyn will benefit from an environment where the teacher provides clear and explicit expectations of how she should complete assignments and conduct herself in class. For example, teachers can use phrases to the entire class such as “Today’s writing exercise will be to write about the world religions passage we just read about and will be an independent exercise. We will have 15 minutes. If you are feeling like you need additional instructions, please remember the steps are all listed on the overhead projector and you can use the graphic organizer in your folder. If you still need assistance, raise your hand and I will help you, but please don’t disrupt the class. If you need more time to complete this exercise, we will have more time at the end of class, and I will also be here during lunch.” When Jocelyn follows the Precorrection guidelines, be sure to acknowledge her efforts. If Jocelyn continues acting out despite Precorrection efforts take time to discuss with her what isn’t working, and then implement changes the next time Precorrection is used.</p> <p><u>Written Behavior Contract</u> Asking Jocelyn to complete a Written Behavior Contract will provide her with clear expectations of what her role as a student will include in a specific class. These guidelines will clarify what steps will be taken if her behavior needs correction, and also how her positive actions can help her obtain rewards and achieve her learning goals. Creating a contract between Jocelyn and her teacher will allow Jocelyn’s input to establish conditions, which will better ensure her adherence. The contract can be shaped to directly address Jocelyn’s behaviors as they relate to writing assignments, and provide Jocelyn with reminders of tools she can access (graphic organizers, knowledge of additional time to work on the assignment, extra support from the teacher) if she is faced with an assignment that is overwhelming.</p>