

POWER Writing Strategy

Type of Writing Supported:

All Types

Grade Level: **Grades 1-8**
Elementary to Middle School

Stage of Writing Supported:
Revising and Editing

PURPOSE:

What does this strategy help students do?

Empowers students to write with clarity and confidence by breaking the process into manageable steps, integrating learned strategies, and fostering independence and organization.

Why is this strategy effective?

It leverages a memorable acronym to support executive functioning and aligns with research-based practices for learners with disabilities.

P

Plan

What do I want to say?

O

Organize

What order makes the most sense?

W

Write

How can I say it clearly and completely?

E

Edit

Did I check for grammar and spelling?

R

Revise

Can I make it better or clearer?

POWER Strategy: Case study

POWER in Action with a Sixth-Grade Student

Teacher: Mr. Carter

Student: Jayden, a sixth-grade student with dysgraphia and ADHD

Classroom Context: Inclusive ELA class during a personal narrative unit

Plan (P)

Mr. Carter begins by introducing the P.O.W.E.R. strategy using a colorful anchor chart and a short video. These visual and auditory tools are particularly effective for learners with attention challenges, as they increase engagement and support retention.

Jayden struggles with idea generation, so Mr. Carter provides a visual brainstorming web and prompts like “What’s a moment that made you feel proud?” These supports help scaffold executive functioning and emotional recall, making abstract planning more concrete.

To support Jayden’s working memory and bypass transcription barriers, Mr. Carter allows him to use speech-to-text to record his ideas before transferring them to a graphic organizer.

Why it works: This multimodal approach empowers students with processing differences and gives them a flexible way to initiate writing.

Plan Summary: Jayden used a visual web and speech-to-text to brainstorm ideas like “soccer,” “goal,” “cheering,” and “proud.”

Jayden chooses to write about scoring his first soccer goal.

Organize (O)

Next, Mr. Carter models how to organize ideas using a simple story map: beginning, middle, and end. This structure gives Jayden a framework to express ideas in sequence—crucial for students who may struggle with linear storytelling.

Jayden uses a color-coded organizer with sentence starters like “First, I…” and “Then, I felt…” These tools help activate his visual learning style and reduce cognitive load.

Mr. Carter checks in with Jayden using the guiding question: “How will you structure your ideas?” Jayden decides to start with the game setup, describe the goal, and end with his teammates cheering.

Why it works: Visual scaffolds like color coding and sentence starters enhance accessibility, supporting students with ADHD and dysgraphia by chunking tasks into clear, manageable steps.

POWER Strategy: Case study

Write (W)

Jayden begins drafting using his organizer as a guide. Mr. Carter encourages him to “write and say more,” reminding him that this step is about getting ideas down, not perfection—a technique that helps reduce anxiety and perfectionism.

Jayden uses a tablet with predictive text tools and keeps a writing checklist taped to his desk for reminders. These supports cater to his motor planning and fluency needs, and reduce the strain of spelling-based interruptions.

Why it works: During the writing phase, focusing on expression over mechanics builds momentum, especially for students who may feel discouraged by their handwriting or spelling difficulties.

- **Jayden’s Draft Writing**

- *The Goal That Changed Everything*

I played soccer. It was hot. I was nervous. I kicked the ball and it went in. Everyone cheered. I was happy.”

Coach said good job. My team was proud. I felt good. I want to do it again. I learned that I can do things. I didn’t think I could. But I did.

Edit (E)

Mr. Carter introduces a peer-editing station with a checklist focused on spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Jayden pairs with a classmate who reads his draft aloud and helps him identify missing periods and spelling errors. This encourages collaboration and auditory feedback.

Jayden uses a highlighter to mark corrections and a digital dictionary to check tricky words—tools that make editing tactile and self-directed.

Why it works: Giving students concrete tools and peer support makes editing feel more like problem-solving than correction.

Revise (R)

For revision, Mr. Carter leads a mini-lesson on “making writing stronger,” showing how to add sensory details and dialogue. This direct instruction helps Jayden go beyond surface edits and explore deeper compositional improvements.

Jayden revises his sentence “I kicked the ball” to “I kicked the ball with all my strength, hoping it would fly past the goalie.” He uses sticky notes to add new ideas and rearranges a few sentences for better flow.

Mr. Carter celebrates his growth with a “Revision Rockstar” badge, reinforcing his effort and building intrinsic motivation.

POWER Strategy: Case study

Why it works: Revision builds students' confidence and creativity. Celebrating their growth reframes revision as a strength, not a weakness.

Outcome: From Effort to Empowerment

By the end of the week, Jayden has a polished personal narrative that includes a clear structure, vivid details, and improved mechanics. He shares his story during the author's chair and beams with pride when classmates applaud.

Mr. Carter reflects that the POWER strategy gave Jayden a roadmap and scaffolding, allowing him to focus on one clear step at a time. Jayden now refers to the anchor chart regularly and even helps a peer organize their ideas.

Jayden's Final Narrative: "The Goal That Changed Everything"

The Goal That Changed Everything

The sun was blazing, and my heart was pounding like a drum. I stood near midfield, hoping today would be different.

I didn't think—I just ran. My feet moved faster than my thoughts. I kicked the ball with everything I had, and it soared past the goalie like a rocket. My teammates screamed and ran toward me. Coach gave me a thumbs-up. I felt like I was flying.

That goal wasn't just a point on the scoreboard. It was proof that I could do hard things—even when my brain tells me I can't.

POWER Strategy: Adaptations

Use Voice-to-Text for Students with Motor Challenges

- Allows students to participate actively in planning and drafting, even when writing by hand is difficult.
- Reduces fatigue and frustration, freeing cognitive energy for idea development.
- Encourages expressive language and fluency without mechanical barriers.
- Tools like built-in speech-to-text features on Chromebooks, tablets, or apps like Google Docs can be game-changers.

Provide Editable Digital Graphic Organizers

- Let students type, drag, and drop elements to brainstorm, organize, and revise.
- Digital organizers are easily customizable for individual goals, support levels, or reading abilities.
- Visuals and color coding can reinforce each POWER step while helping students track their progress.
- They're ideal for remote learners, those who use assistive tech, or students who need reduced visual clutter.

Offer Sentence Frames for Editing and Revising

- Builds metacognitive awareness: students learn how and why to make changes.
- Supports students with language processing difficulties or limited vocabulary.
- Example frames like:
 - "I improved this part by..."
 - "I changed this word because..."
 - "This detail makes my writing clearer because..."

These frames guide reflection while helping students internalize revision as a constructive, empowering process.

The Big Picture: Empowered, Independent Writers

By layering these supports, we aren't lowering expectations—we're creating multiple pathways to meet high expectations. These adaptations foster:

- Engagement
- Agency
- Ownership of writing
- And most importantly: success for every learner

COPS Strategy: Troubleshooting

ISSUE/ CHALLENGE	WHAT TO DO	HELPFUL PROMPTS
Student skips prewriting	Use visual prompts, brainstorming webs, and verbal idea generation	<p>“What’s one thing you want to say?”</p> <p>“Tell me about a time this happened to you.”</p> <p>“Let’s start with a picture or memory.”</p>
Confusion between edit vs. revise	Teach with color-coded examples, sort-and-glue activities, and comparison models	<p>“Is this fixing something small like spelling, or changing something to make it better?”</p> <p>“Are we polishing or adding power?”</p>
Overwhelm with multiple POWER steps	Chunk instruction over days or writing blocks; display a step-by-step visual schedule	<p>“Let’s just focus on planning today.”</p> <p>“Tomorrow we’ll organize, not yet.”</p> <p>“One step at a time—we’ll do this together.”</p>
Student avoids writing because of fear of mistakes	Normalize errors in drafts; use “Write first, fix later” language; allow assistive tech or scribing	<p>“Mistakes are how we learn.”</p> <p>“Your first draft is just for getting ideas out.”</p> <p>“I’ll help you clean it up after.”</p>
Minimal responses or “I don’t know”	Offer choices, sentence stems, picture cues, or allow oral planning before writing	<p>“Would you rather write about friends or music?”</p> <p>“Try this starter: ‘One time I felt...’”</p> <p>“Can you draw it before we write?”</p>
Repetitive word choices or vague ideas	Use word banks, mentor texts, and revision menus to expand vocabulary and depth	<p>“Can we find a stronger word than ‘fun’?”</p> <p>“Let’s look at this example—how did they make it exciting?”</p> <p>“Try picking a word from the bold box.”</p>
Trouble finishing drafts	Break writing into mini-goals and allow timed writing sprints or paragraph frames	<p>“Let’s finish just this sentence now.”</p> <p>“You did great on your first idea—let’s add one more.”</p> <p>“We’re halfway done!”</p>
Peer help feels intimidating or confusing	Use structured partner scripts, editing checklists, and modeled collaboration	<p>“Let’s read your sentences together.”</p> <p>“Can you tell them one thing you liked?”</p> <p>“Here’s a question you can ask your buddy.”</p>

Publication Details

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What is the Writing Classroom?

The Writing Classroom was developed to help educators apply effective, evidence-based writing interventions. Originating at the University of Kansas with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, this initiative supports instructional strategies for all students, especially those who struggle with writing.

What is AI SCORE?

AI-SCORE enhances writing competency for students with learning disabilities by:

- Integrating evidence-based instructional strategies
- Providing immediate AI-generated feedback
- Personalizing the writing process to improve outcomes

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Learn More

 WritingClassroom.org

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 KUCRL.KU.edu/aplm-online

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