

WEBSITE RESOURCE W11.7

Writing and inclusion

Catering for the needs of the writers in your classroom means being aware of individual qualities. Before thinking about the variety of children's approaches to writing, think about your own profile as a writer. On the chart, note your traits and what helps – or hinders – you. Add to the list if it doesn't include your qualities.

Writing traits	What helps	What hinders
worry about making mistakes		
love writing		
can't keep up with my own thoughts		
can write in more than one language		
don't know what to write		
always finish first		
find the physical act of writing difficult		
better at talking than writing		
problems with the technicalities of spelling and/or handwriting		
write fluently and well		
enjoy writing but don't always achieve as well as hoped.		

There's also the sensitive matter of how the culture of the classroom and the expectations and environment provided by a teacher makes a difference. You may not want to share the next reflections with colleagues although it would be valuable if you could.

Have you always felt that your literacy experience was valued by your teachers? For example, did they respect your home language or dialect? Did they recognise and welcome the kinds of reading or writing you preferred? Write a few notes about your memories of how your experiences were valued or excluded from the classroom when you were in school.

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What might the implications be for your teaching?

Eventually you will need to have an idea of the qualities of all the writers in your class so that you can provide a flexible writing curriculum and support and extend them as writers but for the moment just choose four or five children from a class or group that you know and make notes about them. Add any that aren't listed. Remember that one child might show more than one of these qualities.

Writing traits	Name	Ways forward
worries about making mistakes		
loves writing		
can't keep up with their own thoughts (and need a scribe?)		
can write in more than one language		
doesn't know what to write		
is only beginning to write in English		
doesn't achieve as well as might be expected		
always finishes first		
writes accurately but without voice		
finds the physical act of writing difficult		
is better at talking than writing		
has significant problems with the technicalities of spelling and/or handwriting		
writes fluently and well		
enjoys writing but is not considered a 'good' writer		

Focusing on one or two children, consider whether their teacher (and/or you) has a sense of their home literacy experience and values it. How does that manifest itself? How might you provide an inclusive environment where children feel that their qualities and experiences as writers can flourish? (Remembering that creating such an environment doesn't come overnight!)