

# Strategies for Improving Writing in Secondary School

Andy Tharby

Durrington Research School

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021



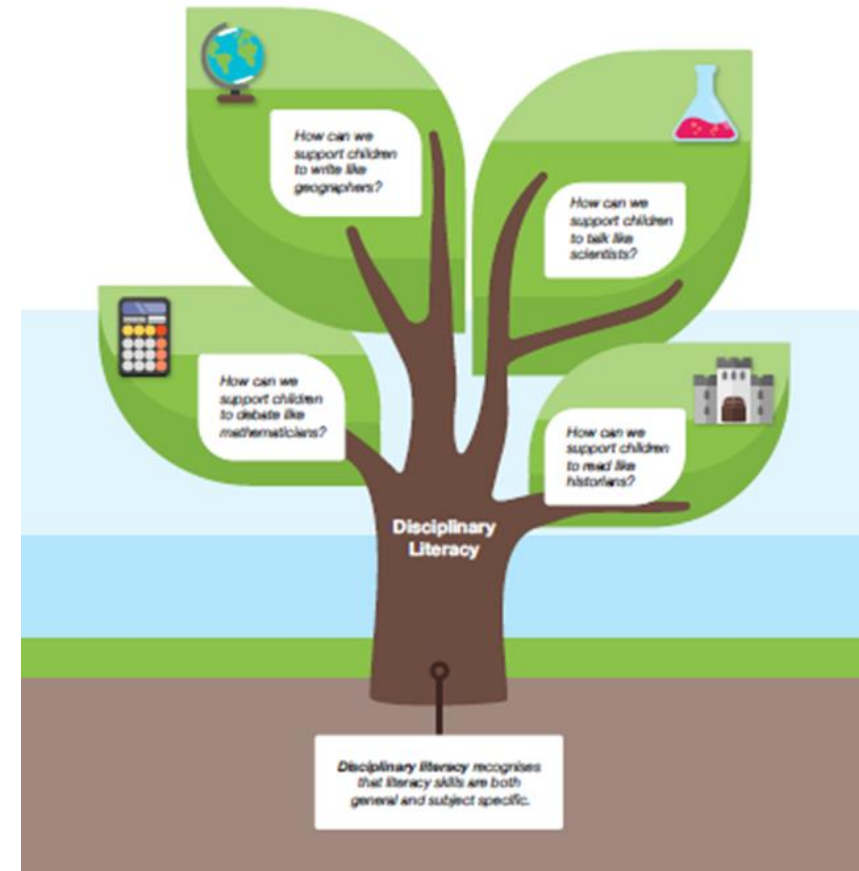
# Session Outline

- **Disciplinary literacy** and its implications for writing in secondary schools.
- Misconceptions about writing in secondary school.
- The simple view of writing.
- Breaking writing down into its composite parts – prepare/draft/evaluate
- Explicit teaching and modelling
- Checklists.
- Combining reading and writing.
- Remote learning tips.

# Disciplinary Literacy

## IMPROVING LITERACY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

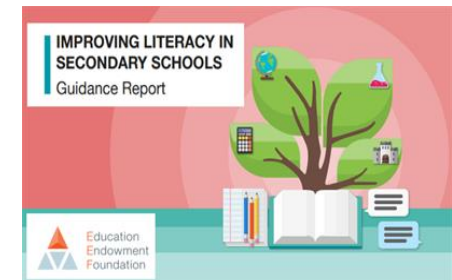
Guidance Report



## 1. Prioritise ‘disciplinary literacy’ across the curriculum

*“Disciplinary literacy is an approach to improving literacy across the curriculum. It recognises that literacy skills are both general and subject specific, emphasising the value of supporting teachers of every subject to teach students how to read, write, and communicate effectively.”*

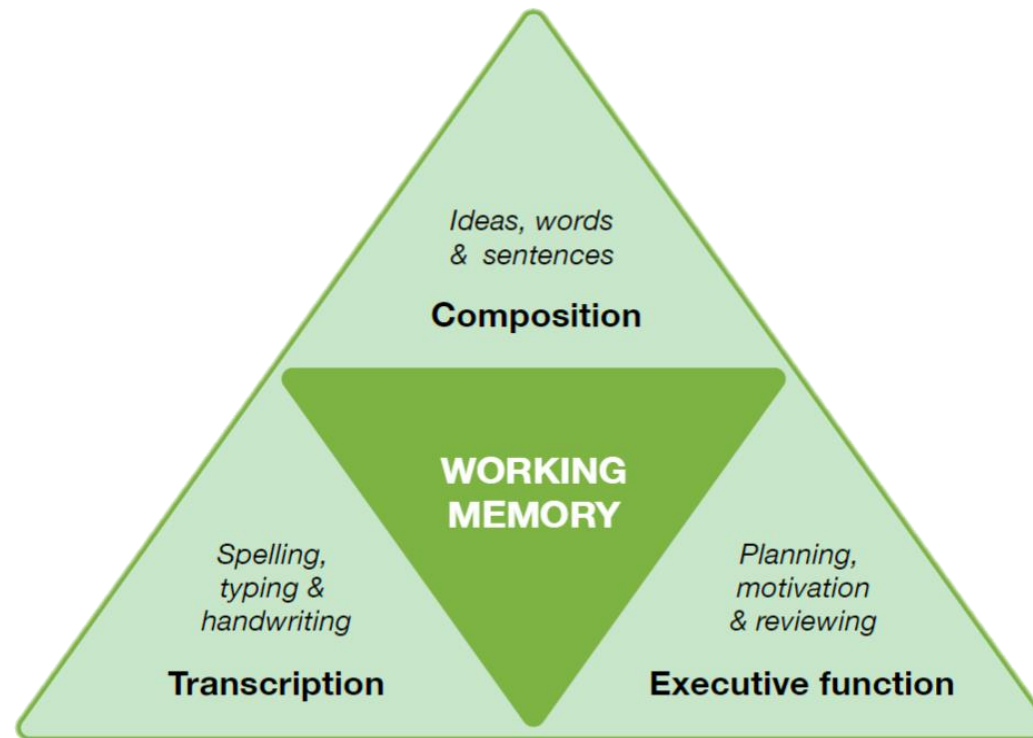
‘Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools Guidance Report’



## Common Misconceptions about Teaching of Writing

- Teaching children to write is the sole responsibility of English teachers.
- Good readers are good writers.
- If my students have know the content well, they will be able to write about it.
- Students should do lots of extended writing at secondary school.
- ‘Authentic’ and imaginative tasks develop writing skills
  - e.g. write a poem about a volcano/write a letter from William the Conqueror to his wife on the eve of the Battle of Hastings

# Simple View of Writing



# 4

## Break down complex tasks



- Writing is challenging and students in every subject will benefit from explicit instruction in how to improve.
- Teachers can break writing down into **planning**, **monitoring** and **evaluation**, and support students by modelling each step.
- Targeted support should be provided to students who struggle to write fluently, as this may affect writing quality.
- Teachers can use a variety of approaches, including collaborative and paired writing, to motivate students to write.

# The Writing Cycle





# **METACOGNITION AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING**

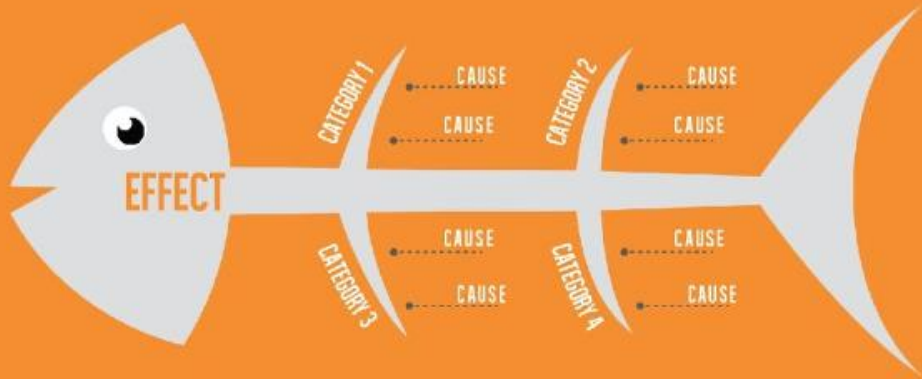
Guidance Report



# Seven-step model for explicitly teaching metacognitive strategies



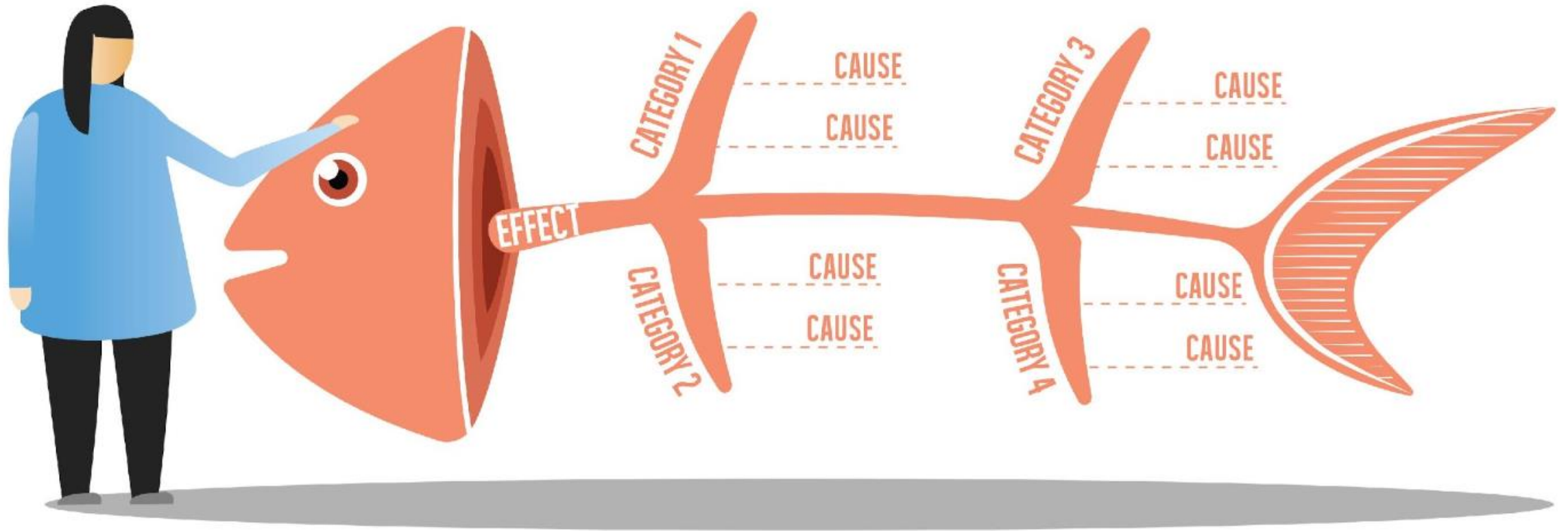
1. Activating prior knowledge
2. Explicit strategy instruction
3. Modelling of learned strategy
4. Memorisation of strategy
5. Guided practice
6. Independent practice
7. Structured reflection

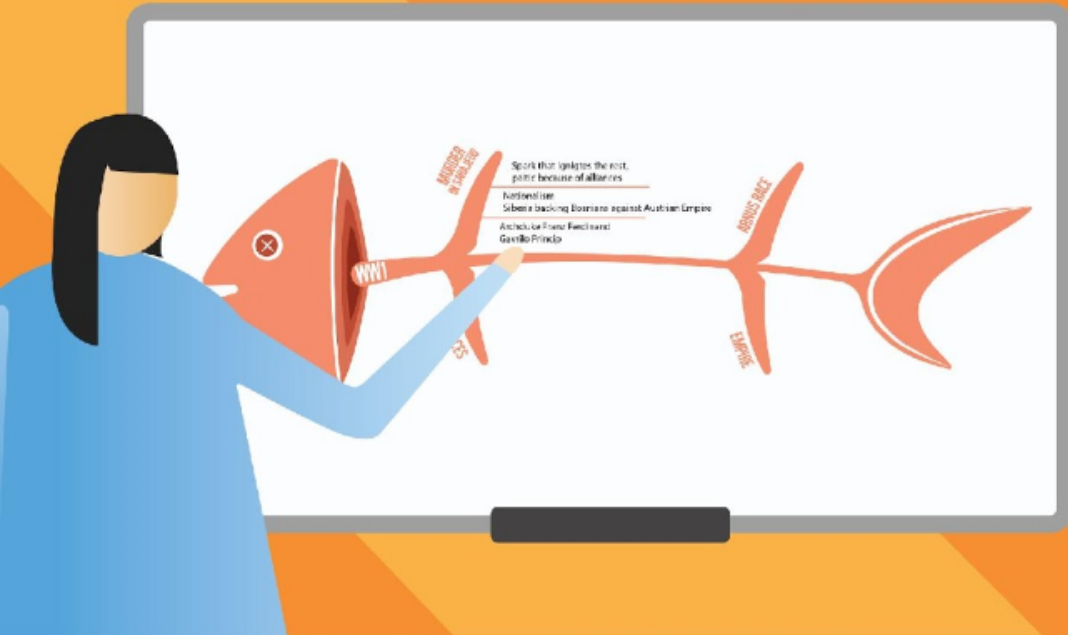




# 1. Activating prior knowledge

## 2. Explicit strategy instruction



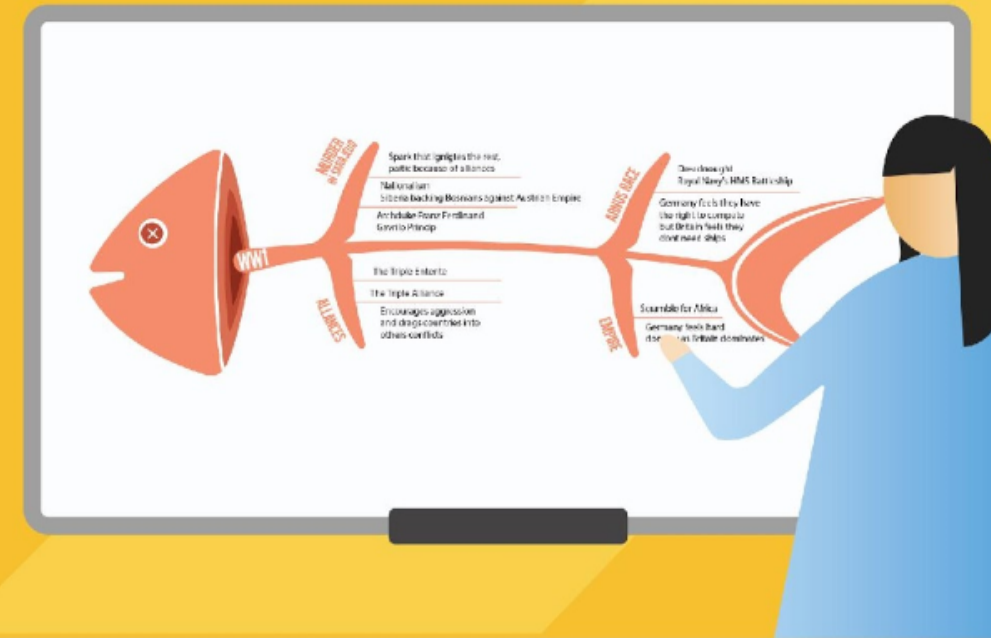


### 3. Modelling of learned strategy



## 4. Memorisation of learned strategy

## 5. Guided practice



## 6. Independent practice





## 7. Structured reflection





## Further modelling tips

- Model the composite parts – e.g. sentence/paragraph/full text planning/how to edit
- Use examples and non-examples.
- Script in advance until you feel confident.
- Focus on the process not the content.
- Fade out the models

## Using checklists for monitoring and reviewing

The writer describes the mountain area at different seasons in the year. In winter the phrase ‘the jagged peaks of the mountains are covered’ shows how the sharp, dangerous rocks are hidden under the beauty of the snow. In spring, however, flowers ‘peep out from their hiding places’. The personification makes it seem that the new life tentatively looks around before decide to emerge. During the later summer months the writer makes the mountain range seem more ‘inhospitable’. The verb ‘flattened’ highlights the effect of the sun on the land.



Use relevant  
subject terms



Use at least three  
short quotations

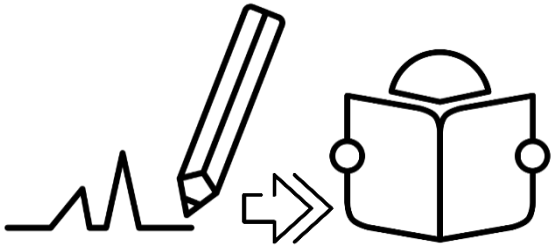


Explain effects  
of language



Explain at least  
one in more detail

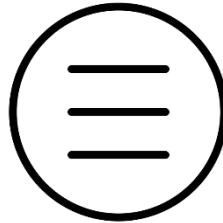
## Combining Reading and Writing



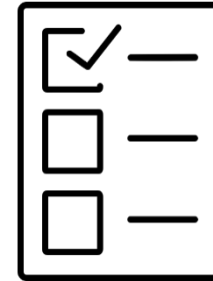
Writing before  
reading



Using  
annotations



Short  
summaries



Creating  
checklists



Anticipating  
misconceptions

## Remote Learning Tips

- Avoid extended tasks with younger and/or less proficient writers.
- Keep challenge at the right level with short, focused writing tasks.
- Limit success criteria.
- Provide visible working memory supports (vocab/sentence starters/model examples).
- Celebrate successful work.