

Knowledge shared = Knowledge²



Learning MATTERS

Chit Chat Discussion Sheet

Natalie Wexler – Building Stronger Writers

Welcome to the Chit Chat between Carla McNeil of Learning MATTERS, and Natalie Wexler. During this Chit Chat, Carla and Natalie explore the critical role of background knowledge in writing, the challenges of teaching writing effectively, and the need for a structured, knowledge-rich approach to developing students' writing skills. They also discussed 'The Writing Revolution 2.0' which Natalie co-authored with Judith Hochman, you can purchase this in our shop [here](#).

We encourage you to listen to the Chit Chat (35 minutes) with your colleagues, team and/or staff, and consider the following questions and discussion points along the way. We hope this helps to cause some robust conversations, build shared understandings and offers an opportunity for reflection.

You may wish to use the strategy of **READ** (*this discussion doc*) → **LISTEN** (*listen to the Chit Chat*) → **CHAT** (*with your colleagues*), sharing your thoughts, learnings and reflections.

- What are some of the misconceptions Natalie shares and what are the implications for these in your setting?
- In terms of the ideal instruction / approach in writing in our classrooms what does Natalie highlight for us to consider? Where does she recommend, we should start our instruction?
- What recommendations does Natalie give to build background knowledge? Why is this an important aspect for us to consider in our classrooms?
- Carla and Natalie discuss the importance of teaching sentence level writing. What were your top three takeaways for your practice?
- There was an interesting discussion about notetaking, what did you take from this that could be transferred into your practice?
- What does stress about the relationship between oral and written language?
- What does writing instruction look like in your setting and what might your next steps be to ensure this is aligned with the updated curriculum and building knowledge.

"Writing about a topic you don't know much about it is almost impossible, and it's a crushing load on working memory to try to absorb and understand new information and write about it essentially at the same time." – Natalie Wexler

We hope you found the Chit Chat thought-provoking and a good opportunity to reflect on your practice. Perhaps you have begun your journey into Structured Literacy and the Science of Reading and there was a lot of affirmation, or perhaps this is your starting point. Either way, you are on your way. We wish you all the best as you too work to make a greater evidence-based shift in your setting.

- Do you have more to learn? What will you do now? What do you think are the next steps for your school?
 - Build more knowledge?
 - Improve teaching practice?
 - Consider resourcing?
 - Build consistency across classrooms?



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