

TEACHING ORTHOGRAPHY AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH ESSAY WRITING

by:

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Orthography, the traditional spelling system of a language, plays a crucial role in developing literacy. This is particularly important for high school students, who engage in more complex writing tasks as they prepare for college and future careers. Mastering orthographic conventions allows students to articulate their thoughts clearly and effectively, making the teaching of orthography through essay writing an essential focus in secondary education.

In an increasingly digital world, the ability to spell correctly is more than an academic requirement; it impacts overall communication skills, reading comprehension, and self-confidence among students. Recent research indicates the profound relationship between orthographic knowledge and academic performance, particularly in writing (Shah et al., 2023). Students struggling with spelling often face challenges in expressing their ideas clearly, which can lead to difficulties in academic assessments and professional contexts.

Teaching orthography through essay writing can be effectively implemented through several key strategies:

a. **Direct Instruction of Orthographic Rules.** Start with teaching students the fundamental rules of spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Explicit instruction has been shown to enhance both spelling and writing skills (Vogel et al., 2019). Teachers can focus on common patterns and exceptions in English orthography, helping students build a strong foundation. For instance, instructional activities that engage students in

identifying root words and their derivatives can be beneficial in promoting orthographic awareness.

b. Modeling and Guided Practice. Educators should model the essay-writing process, explicitly demonstrating how to apply orthographic rules in real-time. Think-aloud strategies can provide insight into the decision-making process regarding spelling and structure (Graham et al., 2021). After the modeling phase, guided practice can give students the opportunity to write collaboratively, sharing techniques and reinforcing orthographic principles through peer support.

c. Writing Workshops. Implement writing workshops that allow students to draft, review, and revise their essays over multiple sessions. Feedback is critical in this learning process. Studies have indicated that formative assessments, with an emphasis on spelling accuracy, contribute to overall writing improvement (Shanahan et al., 2020). Providing structured feedback and encouraging self-editing can reinforce orthographic skills effectively.

d. Utilizing Technology. Incorporating technology into the writing process can also enhance learning. While tools like spell-checkers should not substitute for learning, they can serve as helpful resources for students during revisions. Recent evidence suggests that technology can empower students to take ownership of their writing while also serving as a valuable tool for identifying patterns in their orthographic errors (Dibartolo & Nussbaum, 2022). However, educators should balance this by encouraging independent spelling efforts.

e. Assessment and Reflection. Integrate thoughtful assessment strategies that examine not only content but also orthographic accuracy. Rubrics that emphasize spelling and grammar can provide clear expectations for students. Adding a reflective element to writing assignments where students analyze their spelling mistakes enhances their metacognitive abilities, promoting deeper learning (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2023).

Beyond the practical aspects of orthographic instruction, instilling a passion for writing is paramount. Offering a variety of essay formats – ranging from analytical to creative – can inspire students to engage with writing more meaningfully. Studies show that when students enjoy the writing process, they are more likely to take risks and improve their orthographic skills naturally (Topping et al., 2020).

Teaching orthography through essay writing not only augments students' spelling and writing capabilities but also encourages critical thinking and effective communication. A comprehensive approach that combines explicit instruction, modeling, writing workshops, technology, and reflective practices can create an enriching learning environment. By focusing on the development of orthographic skills in conjunction with fostering a love for writing, educators can significantly enhance students' literacy skills, preparing them for future academic and professional success.

References:

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