Sign Off: Supporting Name Writing

WHAT AND WHY: Name writing is a classic goal that sometimes stays on the IEP for decades! Students typically practice name writing by copying and tracing, which leads to little or no generalization. Signing our name is an important goal, as it is a part of who we are,– but we need to address it using strategies that work!

SUPPORTING NAME WRITING THROUGH SIGN OFF: 'Sign Off' refers to having students sign off when leaving or signing off on their personal work. This can be more motivating than signing in, especially when signing work to be shared or celebrated. Use actual materials (cards, artwork), so that students understand the power of signing off!
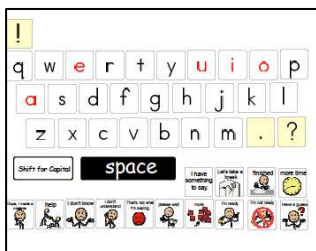
Essential Name Writing Strategy: Give Correct Model AFTERWARDS
(Erickson & Koppenhaver, 2003)

Here is the step-by-step procedure:
Step 1: Make sure the student has an easy way to write! Most of the student's focus should be on thinking about their name—and not to the physical act of making it. (See May, 2009 Tip at www.aacintervention.com). CD with templates & strategies for using alternative pencils: http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/products/available-for-purchase

Step 2: **Student makes a name writing attempt with their alternative pencil.** Below are several examples:

- Robert uses an eye-gaze alphabet frame to write: LYR

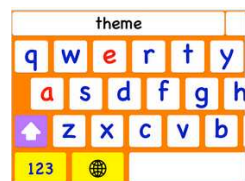- Ariana uses the alphabet page on her AAC device to write: N

  Maria uses an paper based alphabet board to write: M

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- Albert uses Intellikeys Keyboard connected to his computer to write: qwdf

Isabela uses the SuperKeys app on her iPad to write s

- Eliana uses the *Keeble* app on her iPad to write: l

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Step 3: Give instructional feedback. The adult follows up by telling the student what they wrote. Then the adult provides the correct model. The adult spells the student's name out loud and writes it using the student's alternative pencil.
For example:

- Robert: "You wrote LYR. Here's how I write your name" (spells it out loud while showing letters on Alphabet Eye Gaze frame);
- Maria: "You wrote M. Here's how I write your name" (spells it out loud while showing letters on the light tech QWERTY keyboard);
- Eliana: "You wrote L. Here's how I write your name" (spells it out loud while typing it using the Keeble keyboard on her iPad).

**After you give the model, the activity ends! The student should NOT be required to write their name correctly.

> **Providing the model AFTERWARDS gives a cognitive structure for the NEXT time the student writes. It also ensures that students are thinking about how to make their names, rather than just copying a model.**

**It is useful to have a table/chart where you can track students' attempts across the year. See Tip of the Month Sign In Data Form (May, 2014) to download a name writing data form.

AUTHENTIC REASONS TO SIGN OFF:

• **Leaving School:** Just as adults often need to sign out, students can sign out

• **Book Checkout at Library:** Again, this is what typical peers do

• **Communication Log to Parents:** Many teachers write a quick note to parents,and have students add something, even if this is weekly; it's a great time for name signing!

• **Signing IEP, Yearbook, or School Awards:** (Idea from Toy Dill-Booth, NC)

• **Signing Petitions:** We can get students involved from an early age to make change in their worlds – and sign off!

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MORE FUN PURPOSES FOR SIGNING OFF:
• **Signing Artwork:** Both light tech and high tech artwork should be signed off.
Here is one example.
• made a silly picture using *Picturizr* app
• imported into *PicCollage*
• student signs off 1st
• adult says:
'That's how you write Julia. Here's how I write it.
J – U – L – I – A.
This says Julia (kid's writing) and **this** says Julia (adult correct model)'

A Few Fun iPad Art Programs
A Real Reason to Sign Off!

• **Felt Board**
  • Backgrounds, characters,
• **Clicky Sticky**
  • Many many sets!
• **Faces I Make**
  • Veggies & fruits!
• **Stuffy**
  • Bear, Halloween, etc

See ideas for using these and many other apps under 'facilitating speech and language' at:
http://spedapps2.wikispaces.com/Facilitating+Verbal+Speech+and+Language

And For Older Students …
A Real Reason to Sign Off!
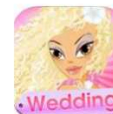
• **Create A Car**
  • Then race it!
• **Superhero Builder**
  • Clothing & powers!
• **Wedding Dressup**
  • Backgrounds, clothes & bling
• **WeeMee**
  • Avatar creator

Name signing should **NOT** be considered the student's writing program.   DANGER