K-12 Writing - Instruction

Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework—Writing (Writing Framework)

Writing instruction requires <u>time</u>; <u>attention</u> to the development of student discourse knowledge, motivation, and comprehension; and <u>differentiated and explicit instruction</u> in general and genre-specific writing strategies.

	Goals	Assessment	Instruction	Leadership	Professional Development	Commitment
Schools			⭐			
Districts						
State						

Six Organizing Principles of High-Quality, Effective Writing Instruction:

✪ **Requires sufficient time for systematic writing opportunities** both within English language arts classes, where writing instruction and practice traditionally occur, and in *all* content area classes.

✪ **Details the rationale and methods for explicitly teaching the writing process,** including the incorporation of student writing strategies for planning, writing first drafts, revising, and editing text across different text genres. This principle includes guidelines and steps for teaching writing strategies, examples of writing strategies, and sample planning sheets that can be used at different stages of the writing process. Principle 2 also provides information about how teachers can provide focused feedback to students and effectively use peer collaboration during the writing process.

✪ **Addresses different types of discourse knowledge that will help students write more effectively**. Discourse knowledge includes an understanding of text structure—that is, how writing is organized for effective communication in different subject areas (e.g., writing a science report vs. writing a fictional narrative). Discourse knowledge also involves vocabulary, syntax, and other language-based features important in different subjects. Spelling, the effective use of word processing and other technologies support the development of discourse knowledge.

✪ **Addresses motivation as a key element in writing development** by examining strategies to help students view themselves as capable writers and providing authentic writing activities within the overall writing program.

✪ **Incorporates differentiated instruction through a multi-tiered instructional approach.** Differentiation consists of increasing the level of instructional explicitness, delivering small group instruction, and increasing the amount of instructional time devoted to writing.

✪ **Uses writing as a tool to strengthen reading comprehension and to enhance learning across the curriculum.** Examples for integrating writing instruction in content and technical areas, particularly at the secondary level, are provided.

Consider the challenges many students encounter with writing. Do you recognize any familiar challenges in the box below?

Student Challenges with Writing
Many students. . . • don't know how to approach writing as a process (e.g., "I don't know how to get started;" "I don't know what to do next;" "Re-write my paragraph? I just finished writing it! I'm not going to write it again.") • get lost in the writing process (e.g., "What should I do now?") • view writing as one big "content generation" or brainstorming exercise and write whatever comes to mind in free-flowing fashion • struggle with how to focus their attention during writing (e.g., "What ideas should be included in my paragraph? What ideas don't belong?;" "When I write, lots of ideas are in my head, but I forget my ideas because it takes all my attention just to write (or form letters, spell, type, etc.) • are consumed with the transcription skills of handwriting (or typing), spelling, thinking about what vocabulary to use as they write so they don't have very much class time to compose text • are consumed with language, English grammar, and thinking about what vocabulary to use as they write so they don't have very much class time to compose text • don't remember or understand the focus or purpose of their writing assignment. Sometimes they write about unrelated topics, include too many "off topic" ideas, or don't elaborative enough on the ideas presented

Student Challenges with Writing

- don't know how to translate planning notes into written text. Students might write from planning notes with laborious uncertainty or write about something totally different than the topic discussed during the planning process

- don't know how to work with peers during the writing process. For example, working cooperatively, providing appropriate feedback, and staying on task during partner work is challenging

- don't know how to talk about writing

- don't know what makes good writing good

- think that revising means going on a "punctuation or grammar hunt." (e.g., "That sentence needs a period. That sentence needs to start with a capital. I need to put a comma here. All done! I just revised my paper."

- think that revising means fix only three things

- think that writing has to be perfect the first time

- think that the planning and brainstorming stage of writing *is* writing

- think that writing is about copying ideas from a textbook, Wekipedia, or some other information source

- aren't motivated to participate in writing assignments because many school writing tasks are contrived, lack a meaningful connection to student realities, and don't have authenticity

- believe that one or two sentences constitutes a fully completed "essay," or believe that writing is something that has to be "long" (e.g., the one sentence paragraph, rambling pages and pages of ideas)

- expect to "fail" at writing because writing is too hard (e.g., "I'm just a better reader. Writing is too hard."; "I CAN"T WRITE;" "Writing is overwhelming. It takes too long. It's too much work. There are too many steps.")

- don't know how to use writing to learn and study (e.g. "Why do I have to write a summary about the assigned textbook chapter from science class?" "Why do we have to write our own discussion questions for class?")

- don't know how to use sources to support ideas or articulate a clear written opinion

- think that all forms of writing follow the same structure (e.g., "I used the same outline and structure for my story about space aliens and my school newspaper editorial about the new dress code policy.")

- think they don't like writing, and/or

- think writing is boring.

The *K-12 Writing* chapter on Instruction addresses **"how to"** help students overcome writing challenges like the ones listed above. It focuses on **how to** teach writing so students meet the K-12 Writing Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects—and become successful writers.

Organizing Principle 1 discusses **how to** provide and structure instructional time for writing.

Organizing Principle 2 details **how to**

- Teach the writing process by using explicit instruction to break the writing process into manageable stages and make the internal, "invisible," self-talk that good writers use concrete and visible to student learners

- Address student challenges related to the planning and revising process: it helps those who

    o Think writing has to be perfect the first time

    o Believe that a completed essay consists of one or two sentences (or pages and pages of rambling text)

    o Get lost in the writing process and lose track of the purpose and focus of their writing

- Address student challenges with peer writing and use peer collaboration efficiently and effectively during classroom writing instruction

- Have conversations about writing and talk about writing.

Organizing Principle 3 focuses on **how to**

- Address the foundational skills required to write and communicate effectively, such as handwriting, typing, word processing and other technologies

- Work with student challenges related to the development of fluent transcription skills (e.g., handwriting, typing, spelling)

- Teach text structure of different genres of writing specifically the text types required by the K-12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Writing: argument, informational/explanatory, and narrative.

Organizing Principle 4 discusses **how to**

- Make writing interesting, authentic, and meaningful

- Meet student challenges related to motivation

- Help reluctant writers who may think writing is boring or irrelevant to everyday student realities.

Organizing Principle 5 examines **how to**

- Help students who struggle with writing

- Differentiate writing instruction through a multi-tiered instructional approach for

    o Highly proficient writers

    o Much less proficient writers who are laboring to use correct language, English grammar, and vocabulary as they write.

Organizing Principle 6 focuses on **how to**

- Use writing to strengthen student learning, study skills, and comprehension

- Integrate writing into content and technical subject areas, particularly at the secondary level.

The following section presents each of the six organizing principles with an overview of the research and specific recommendations, including "how to" information, for classroom implementation.

Please note: This chapter includes numerous examples of instructional strategies and materials (i.e., graphic organizers) to help illustrate the evidence-based content of the chapter and to provide teachers with instructional planning ideas. These strategies and materials do not represent an endorsement by the Oregon Department of Education. When examples are included in a "small form" format within the chapter, full-size versions can be found in the Resources section at the conclusion of the chapter.

Organizing Principle 1: Provide Sufficient Time for Writing Instruction across the Curriculum

To obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to be college and career-ready writers as outlined in the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, ample time must be provided for writing instruction and practice (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Writing Time

Schools should specify when (a) explicit writing instruction will occur, and (b) when students will practice writing. It is crtical that writing instruction and student engagement in writing practice occur *across* the curriculum.

Unfortunately, students often spend very little time in school writing. A national survey (Gilbert & Graham, 2010) indicates that primary grade students spend only 20 to 30 minutes per day actually writing, and very little time is devoted to teaching students how to write (e.g., to use the writing process). In the intermediate grades, students spend approximately 25 minutes per day writing and about 15 additional minutes are spent directly teaching writing. At the secondary level, many students spend little time writing in any of their academic subjects, including English (Applebee & Langer, 2006).

Although existing research and empirical evidence do not provide specific guidelines for the amount of time required for explicit writing instruction, or how much time each day students should spend engaged in the writing process, there is consensus among experts that schools should substantially increase the amount of time devoted to writing instruction and the amount of time students actually spend writing. The National Commission on Writing, for example, recommends that **the amount of time students write in school each day should at least be doubled**, that writing assignments should be assigned across the curriculum, and that students should spend significantly more out-of-school time writing (National Commission on Writing, 2006). The Commission states that this change alone "will do more to improve student performance than anything else states or local leaders can do" (p. 31).

To better ensure students use this time effectively, teachers should increase the amount of time each day they devote to teaching writing skills, processes, and knowledge. Long-time writing expert and researcher Donald Graves suggests that **elementary** grade teachers should spend *at least* **35-40 minutes on daily writing instruction** and related student writing activities starting in first grade. As writing demands become more complex, the amount of time for writing should increase. **Secondary students should spend *at least* one hour engaged in writing-specific tasks each day.** The one hour daily recommendation can be distributed across secondary classes *if* subject- area classes deliberately

schedule and coordinate how writing time is focused across classes. For example, a science class might include 15-minutes of daily writing instruction related to hypothesis testing and the scientific method while a social studies/history class might devote a daily 20-mintues to argument-writing related to current or historical events.

Overall, writing involves the integration of several skills if written communication is going to be effective, and learning how to express ideas and communicate clearly takes time. Writing requires a very different type of engagement than learning mathematics or how to read with comprehension. Therefore, **writing requires the consistency of dedicated time each school day.** Occasionally devoting short blocks of time to writing instruction (or incidentally when students appear to need it) while teaching other content such as reading will not provide the time necessary for students to become effective writers.

Although reading and writing are closely connected (Englert, Hiebert, & Stewart, 1998; Dickson, 1999), and the K-12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts (ELA) & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects suggests an integrated model of literacy development, **it is important *no*t to assume that writing is the "flip side" of reading**. It's important not to assume that if students are good readers, they must also be good writers or have all the skills necessary to become good writers with some application and practice. Though research has found a strong association between reading and writing proficiency, there is no evidence to suggest that the best path to becoming an effective writer is through the improvement of reading skills alone. In other words, improvements can't be expected by simply combining reading and writing together or by replacing one with the other. Although proficient reading is an important component to becoming a successful writer, many students learn to read and comprehend difficult academic material but still struggle to write coherent texts of their own (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). Therefore, students must receive instruction in both reading and writing so that writing development will be influenced by reading instruction and reading development will be influenced by writing instruction.
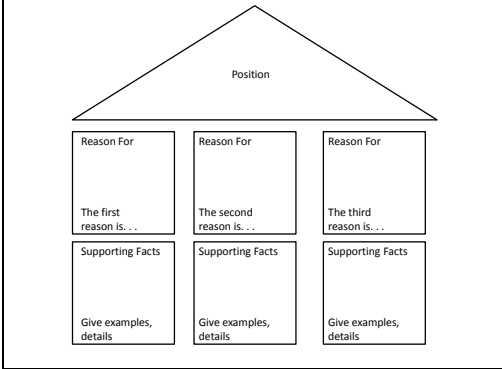
The table below illustrates how both reading and writing can be used to address some common writing domains. Note how both writing and reading focus on the same domain, but reinforce the domain through a different emphasis. For example, consider how teaching the main idea in reading could influence a student's understanding about writing focus, and how teaching writing focus during writing instruction could influence student use of main idea and summarization as comprehension strategies during reading. Even though teaching both writing focus in writing and main idea identification in reading may have powerful instructional synergy, *each specific emphasis is still necessary*. Main idea identification requires reading instruction. Understanding writing focus and writing with focus requires writing instruction.

Writing-Reading Specific and Synergistic Instruction		
Writing Domains	**Writing**	**Reading**
Focus	**Explicitly teach how to maintain focus, or a controlling point, when writing.**	**Explicitly teach how to identify main idea and details and how to retell/summarize as reading comprehension strategies.**

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">Writing-Reading
Specific and Synergistic Instruction</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">Writing Domains</td><td align="center">Writing</td><td align="center">Reading</td></tr>
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<td>A single controlling point made with awareness of task about a specific topic or mode.</td>
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Practice Activities:

- Students read their writing aloud to the class, small group, or partner. Can listeners identify the main idea(s)?

- Students exchange paragraphs so someone else summarizes the paragraph. If the summaries show more than one topic, the paragraph is not focused.

- As a lesson "warm-up," students write a 5-minute paragraph. When asked to stop writing, students write a one-sentence summary of their paragraphs.

- Students help design their own editing/revision check list designed to focus on the required writing topic.

- Teach students how to read writing prompts. Have students circle key words and restate the assigned topics and modes. Use graphic organizers whenever possible.

- Develop anticipation guides of 5-10 statements based on a future writing assignment. Discuss each statement with the class or individual student. Then have student(s) generate an essential question based on the discussion. Students answer the essential question as their guiding focus for an essay.

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Practice Activities:

- Use a main idea chart or gist log when reading.

Sample 1 – Gist Log:

Gist Log

1. Who or what is the paragraph mostly about?

2. What is the most important information about the who or what?

3. Write the gist/main idea in a complete sentence of 10 words or less.

Sample 2 – Main Idea Charts:

Main Idea Chart

Paragraph/Section	Details	Main Idea
1	Bantu migrated south They fought other tribes They often won Losing tribes joined them	Wars during the Bantu migration resulted in many small tribes' demise.

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Writing-Reading Specific and Synergistic Instruction		
Writing Domains	**Writing**	**Reading**
		Main Idea Sentence / Detail 1 / Detail 2 / Detail 3 Explicitly teach how to use oral or written retells or summaries as a comprehension strategy. <u>Practice Activities</u>: • Use a retell prompt sheet or summary chart for retelling/summarizing as an after reading comprehension strategy. Sample 1 – Summarization: Summary Chart Main Idea / Main Idea / Main Idea Summary
Content and Organization Content: Presence of ideas developed	**Explicitly teach how genre-specific text structure can be used to organize writing and develop content** (See Principle 3 for additional information)**.** (e.g., What are the elements in a story?; What makes a good persuasive	**Explicitly teach genre-specific text structure and how genre-specific text structure can be used for retelling, summarizing, and overall text comprehension.**

Writing-Reading Specific and Synergistic Instruction		
Writing Domains	**Writing**	**Reading**
through story elements, facts, examples, anecdotes, details, opinions, statistics, reasons, and/or explanations Organization: The order developed and sustained within and across sentences/paragraphs using transitional devices including introduction and conclusion *See "K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension in the Common Core," pp. 22-25 and 41-43, Oregon Literacy Plan, for additional examples of	paragraph? How do you write a good opinion or argument? How does text structure help organize writing? How does text structure help think about writing content?) Practice Activities: • Discuss writing samples as models (e.g., examples and non-examples). Share and discuss samples that represent models of a specific genre. Discuss how text structure helps specify content and organize writing. • Use a genre-specific prompt sheet, think sheet, or note sheet during the planning and editing/revising phases of the writing process. Sample 1 – Argument (Elementary) I liked 🙂 / didn't like 🙁 _____ because_____. Sample 2 – Argument (Upper Elementary – Secondary)	Practice Activities: • Use text structure to facilitate retells, summaries, and discussions of text for the purpose of building listening or reading comprehension. Sample 1 – Argument (Elementary) I liked 🙂 / didn't like 🙁 _____ because_____. Sample 2 – Argument (Upper Elementary – Secondary) Position Reason For / The first reason is. . . / Supporting Facts / Give examples, details Reason For / The second reason is. . . / Supporting Facts / Give examples, details Reason For / The third reason is. . . / Supporting Facts / Give examples, details (Reznitskaya et al., 2008)

Writing-Reading Specific and Synergistic Instruction		
Writing Domains	**Writing**	**Reading**
how text structure can be integrated into writing and reading. Narrative and information/explanatory examples are provided.	 Position Reason For — The first reason is. . . Supporting Facts — Give examples, details Reason For — The second reason is. . . Supporting Facts — Give examples, details Reason For — The third reason is. . . Supporting Facts — Give examples, details (Reznitskaya et al., 2008)	
Style The choice, use, and arrangement of words and sentence structure that creates style and tone	**Explicitly teach how to write with style and a purposeful writer's voice.** Practice Activities: • Remind students that style represents *personality on paper*. Show students two or three different styles of writing from published authors. Ask students to select which styles they prefer and discuss why. • Students are directed to highlight specific types of words to illustrate varied and interesting word choices. For example, students might be asked to highlight all the verbs in one paragraph and then change three of them by using different verbs. • Students practice sentence polishing or sentence-combining (See Principle 3). • Students are asked to write about a topic from different points of view (e.g., the nasty neighbor down the street, the police officer, a good	**Explicitly teach how word choice, sentence structure, and style and tone relate to a text's purpose and impact a text's clarity and overall meaning.** Practice Activities: • Conduct a series of author studies. Compare and contrast the writing styles of selected authors. • Examine how different authors write about the same topic. How does the author's style impact the text's meaning? • Teach vocabulary, word choice selection, and sentence-combining strategies (See Principle 3).

Writing-Reading Specific and Synergistic Instruction		
Writing Domains	**Writing**	**Reading**
	friend, a parent, a teacher). • Students are given a model paragraph to rewrite from the perspective of different celebrities, pop icons, or current newsmakers.	

*Credit given to Dr. Lana Edwards Santoro. For full-page versions of the templates above, see the Resources section of this chapter.

Instructional Time: Elementary

At the elementary level, the amount of time available for writing instruction should be increased from current levels to a consistent daily minimum of 35 to 40-minutes by

- Increasing the total amount of time devoted to language arts to ensure adequate writing time or by

- Setting aside a time for writing that is in addition to, and distinctively separate from, the designated reading block.

If teachers set aside a separate block of time for writing, it is critical that they not neglect the **integration of writing and reading opportunities in language arts**. That is, writing instruction and practice must include deep engagement with text—text students discuss, read, and consider as they learn to express their own ideas and communicate effectively through their own writing. Elementary-level instructional time should also focus on foundational aspects of writing, including basic skills like spelling and handwriting. Instruction on the mechanics of writing should be integrated with instruction on higher-level associated skills and other grade-specific standards outlined in the K-12 CCSS for Writing. For example, a writing lesson might include an instructional "warm-up" with instruction focused on handwriting, spelling, or mechanics (transcription skills) followed by instruction focused on composition and the writing process.

In addition to instructional time specifically dedicated to writing instruction (i.e., 35-45 minute daily minimum), writing instruction should *also* be integrated into the content areas. Writing, like reading, has a discipline-specific aspect. Students who learn to write effectively about history, for example, require **writing instruction and practice during history class**. In an elementary science class, the teacher might explicitly teach a writing strategy for summarization, and then assign the students a writing assignment to **summarize findings about a science unit** they just completed. In a **mathematics** class, students might first learn to complete a multi-step calculation then **write a paragraph sequencing the steps to solve the problem**. Limitless opportunities exist to teach and practice writing in content-area classes.

Instructional Time: Secondary

For schools to **"double the amount of time for writing instruction"** at the secondary level, writing instruction cannot be confined to the English classroom, but should occur across the curriculum in all content areas. The K-12 CCSS for Writing include writing standards for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. These standards are listed across content areas in grade level bands for students in grades 6-12.

Incorporating writing across the curriculum increases both writing instruction and practice opportunities. It also acknowledges that effective writing can occur in different ways, with different structures, and with different production procedures depending upon the context, audience, and purpose for which written communication is produced. A written report for a science experiment, for example, will differ in process and form from a multi-paragraph book report prepared for an English class. Writing to advertise a product in a business class requires a different approach from writing a persuasive piece on a contemporary issue in a social studies class. Learning to write across the curriculum helps students understand *when* to apply *what* writing strategies based on the audience, purpose, and type of writing task. Resources for writing across the curriculum can be found in *Principle 6: Use Writing as a Tool to Enhance Learning across the Curriculum.*

Organizing Principle 2: Explicitly Teach the Writing Process by Incorporating Strategies for Planning, Writing First Drafts, Revising and Editing across Different Genres

A planned and structured process-approach to teaching writing incorporates the following evidence-based instructional recommendations:

- Explicitly teach specific strategies for prewriting, writing, and revising text across genres, and use graphic organizers (e.g., think sheets, planning sheets, prompt cards) and mnemonics to help make the recursive processes of writing more concrete.

- Provide quality, structured feedback to individual students, develop and teach a process for peer collaboration, and use teacher-facilitated discussions to build on-going, purposeful classroom discourse about writing.

Explicitly Teach Writing Process Strategies

Although some students may learn how to write through an informal process-approach to writing, the majority of students will require explicit writing instruction. Before reading about explicit instruction, answer the reflection questions in the "thought box" below.

Thought Box
• Have you ever struggled with writing? If so, did you struggle with writing as an overall process or did you struggle with writing within a particular genre (e.g., argument, narrative, explanation) and/or subject area? Why did you struggle with writing?

Thought Box
• Have you ever found writing challenging? If so, why was writing challenging?
• Have you ever participated in a course as an adult learner and experienced frustration because the expectations and/or grading requirements for a written assignment were not provided. For example, the course instructor may have asked you to submit a writing assignment on a specific topic. Other than the assignment, no other guidelines were provided. How should the writing assignment "look," what content needs to be included, what critical features should be addressed, etc.? In other words, you didn't know what the instructor was expecting or how the assignment would be graded. (e.g., What does an "A" assignment look like? How will the assignment be graded and scored? What content needs to be included? How should it be written? What structure should be followed?)
• Have you ever participated in a course as an adult learner when you wanted the instructor to provide a model for a written assignment (e.g., reflection or opinion paper, lesson plan, observation analysis, research paper or thesis)? For example, if submitting a lesson plan in an education course: How should the lesson plan be written? What critical features or components need to be included in the lesson plan? What does a good lesson plan look like? In other words, "show me how to write a good lesson plan and give me some models so I can see what good lesson plans look like. Teach me how to think and what to think about as I write a good lesson plan."

Explicit instruction is designed to make **"the what" of writing–the strategies, internal self-talk writers use, and text structure of a genre—visible to students**. Writing is a complex, recursive process that requires an internal orchestration of planning, organizing, writing, editing, revising, and re-writing skills. Good writers often employ multiple processes, such as editing, revising, and re-writing, simultaneously. Each component of the writing process is itself complex. For example, planning a written composition requires an understanding of the topic and purpose of the writing task, brainstorming and idea generating, an ability to sort relevant from irrelevant ideas (e.g., main ideas from details), and organization skills (e.g., an understanding of how ideas will be grouped and sequenced). To help students negotiate the complexity of the writing process, each component of the writing process becomes overt and visible with the model/demonstrate, guided practice, and independent practice phases of explicit instruction (Baker, Gersten, & Graham, 2003; MacArthur, 2006). In other words, students develop highly proficient writing skills and learn how writing works when they are explicitly taught strategies for planning, writing, editing, and revising text. Read the K-12 Practice Alert below for tips on preparing explicit instruction when teaching writing.

K-12 Practice Alert

Having students write and telling students to write is <u>not </u>writing instruction. Regardless of whether students are learning to write sentences, narratives, study questions for biology class, or complex arguments with supporting and opposing perspectives, students, particularly struggling writers and ELs, need to see how to write and what the writing process looks like. Explicit instruction teaches writing by showing students how to write. Explicit instruction demonstrates and models how good writers write and think through the use of teacher "think alouds" during writing demonstrations.

To prepare for explicit instruction, be ready to demonstrate writing for students with an overhead projector, chart paper, Smart Board, LCD projection system, etc**. Writing "live" in the classroom requires practice and preparation**. For example, drafts of writing that will be demonstrated in class can be developed during lesson preparation. Even though writing will be modeled "fresh" and "live," lesson drafts of writing models help identify the content of the models and the focus of the "think alouds" that will be used during the writing demonstration. Preparing good models and demonstration techniques requires time and practice. Consider the following ideas as an initial brainstorm. What other ways can models and demonstration of writing be prepared and developed?

- Use grade-level or subject-area team meetings to assemble models and practice writing demonstrations.

- Individually practice writing and address any personal writing challenges (e.g., spelling, word choice and vocabulary use) so "live" classroom writing feels fluent and secure. Of course, sometimes it's helpful for students to see challenges that writers face with spelling, composing, etc. Practicing writing individually, however, allows the lesson to focus on the purpose of instruction, not on writing production per se.

- Create a study group or professional learning community "course" that includes the development of writing models and other materials for explicit instruction (e.g., graphic organizers, examples/non-examples of writing for class discussion, strategies).

- Schedule informal observations to observe how writing is modeled and demonstrated in other classrooms. Exchange tips on what works and doesn't work quite as well during "live" modeling.

- Other ideas?

Good writers use a variety of strategies throughout the writing process. A strategy is a set of operations or actions that a person consciously undertakes to accomplish a goal. When instructional commitment and effort is applied to strategy instruction, there are substantial, positive effects on the quality of students' writing (Gersten & Baker, 2001; Graham & Harris, 2005; Graham & Perin, 2007). Writing strategies include techniques for brainstorming and text revision, as well as strategies focused on specific genres such as argument, informative/explanatory, narratives, or research reports. The **ultimate goal of strategy development is for students to deliberately and independently activate taught strategies when writing**. Over time, strategies for planning, writing, editing, and revising will, in essence, become the "invisible knowledge" that students carry in their heads while engaging in writing tasks.

There are *four important considerations* when using strategy instruction to help promote high quality student writing:

1. General writing strategies can be applied "generically" across a variety of genres. As a result, the time invested to comprehensively and explicitly teach general writing strategies has a "high mileage" return for students.

2. Explicit instruction is used to teach strategies. Explicit instruction can be applied to the strategies used during each stage of the writing process.

3. Graphic organizers, such as organizational charts, "think sheets," prompt sheets, and prompt cards, are used with a writing strategy to make the writing process, or a specific stage of the writing process, more visible and concrete

4. Students require instruction that is specifically focused on the planning and revision phases of writing.

Each of the four considerations is discussed in more detail below.

Teach General Writing Strategies

General writing strategies can be applied "generically" across a variety of genres to illustrate the stages of the writing process. For example, "**POWER**" can be used as a mnemonic and writing strategy to help students remember the main steps of the writing process (**<u>P</u>lan, <u>O</u>rganize, <u>W</u>rite, <u>E</u>dit, and <u>R</u>evise**; Englert, Raphael, & Anderson, 1992; Englert et al., 1991). As a strategy, POWER can be applied generically to any genre. In the first step of POWER, planning begins by identifying the purpose of the writing task and brainstorming ideas that can be used for writing. Organizing, POWER's second step, continues with the categorization and ordering of ideas on an organizational chart or "think sheet" (e.g., cross-out ideas that won't be used, connect ideas that go together, number the ideas in the order they will occur in the written composition). During writing, the third step, students use their organization chart or "think sheet" as a guide for writing their first draft. Step four, editing, consists of using an edit check list to review and edit the first draft. Editing can include writer, peer, and teacher contributions, and it can focus on writing mechanics or the writing content and ideas. Editing mechanics focuses on writing conventions and editing content focuses on the quality of ideas and effective communication. The fifth and final step, revision, consists of identifying the editing suggestions that will be used to improve the text (e.g., place a star or checkmark next to the editing suggestions that will be revised in the rewrite) and rewriting the written composition.

Most importantly, when implementing the POWER strategy, explicit instruction is used to teach each stage of the strategy with model/demonstrate, guided practice, and independent practice phases of instruction.

Many general **writing strategies involve the use of a "plan of action."** A plan of action consists of specific steps that are needed to accomplish a writing task (Baker, Gersten, & Graham, 2003). A plan of action is helpful to both teachers and students because it provides a structure for remembering the critical steps necessary to develop a written product and provides guidance on what to do when the writer feels stuck or overwhelmed. The following writing strategy, "PLEASE," illustrates a "plan of action" for teaching students how to write a paragraph. Note how the mnemonic, PLEASE, is used as a scaffold for the strategy.

PLEASE A Paragraph Writing Strategy	☑
Pick a topic.	
List your ideas about the topic.	
Evaluate your list.	
Activate the paragraph with a topic sentence.	
Supply supporting sentences.	
End with a concluding sentence.	
And	
Evaluate your work.	

*Adapted from *Writing Better: Effective Strategies for Teaching Students with Learning Difficulties*, by S Graham and K. R. Harris, p. 43. Copyright 2005 Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Specific plans of action, or strategic knowledge about writing, are not needed for every writing task, such as writing a note to a friend or writing a thank you note to a teacher. However, many of the writing tasks delineated in the K-12 CCSS for Writing do require strategic knowledge. It is important to use the following general principles when selecting and teaching writing strategies (Graham & Harris, 2005):

- ✓ **Teach strategies that students will have opportunities to use.**
- ✓ **Teach strategies that can be made more or less sophisticated.**
- ✓ **Sequence strategies so they build upon one another.**
- ✓ *Teach selected strategies well* **rather than teaching every possible strategy.**

Finally, it's important to note that even though general writing strategies are critical to learning about the writing process, specific forms or genres of writing also require the use of strategies, explicit instruction, and graphic organizers. Principle 3 focuses on the discourse knowledge required for effective writing and discusses the use of genre-specific instruction in more detail.

Provide Explicit Instruction

Explicit instruction teaches the selected strategies well. Explicit instruction includes overt teacher modeling of each step within the writing strategy, guided practice in using the steps, continual teacher feedback, and scaffolded assistance until the student can use the strategy independently. **Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)** is an example of an explicit instructional approach for writing development and self-regulation. "Self-regulated learners" are learners who plan, set goals, organize, self-monitor, and self-evaluate their learning and performance. Over twenty years of research on self-regulation consistently shows that a "self-regulated" approach to writing contributes to improvements in student writing knowledge, strategic behaviors, self-regulation skills, and motivation (Santangelo, Harris, & Graham, 2007). The SRSD model has six recursive stages that guide students' acquisition and application of a writing strategy and corresponding self-regulation behaviors. In other words, the stages can and should be reordered, combined, modified, and repeated to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers can use these steps when teaching any writing strategy.

Steps for Teaching Writing Strategies		
Stage	**Description**	**Additional Information**
1. Develop and Activate Background Knowledge	Students are taught background knowledge and preskills needed to use the strategy successfully including specialized vocabulary (e.g., setting, characters, persuade, opinion, etc.).	• The teacher identifies and assesses these prerequisites.
2. Discuss It	The teacher and students discuss the purpose and benefits of using the new strategy, with the writing strategy being carefully explained.	• The teacher and students examine each student's current level of performance on the targeted writing genre to help students see what they are doing now and what they can expect to do once they learn the strategy.
3. Model It	The teacher models how to use the strategy and self-regulation techniques while writing an actual composition during this stage.	• Modeling also includes the use of initial prompts such as mnemonics, think sheets, and other graphic organizers typically used with most writing strategies. • The teacher can also model the use of goal setting, such as including all four parts of the strategy, and evaluate the composition to see if the goal was met.
4. Memorize It	Students memorize the steps in the composing strategy and the meaning of any mnemonics used to represent the strategy steps.	• It is okay for students to paraphrase the information, as long as the original meaning is maintained. • Memorization of the strategy can continue into the next stage, or be combined with the next stage.
5. Support It	Students practice using the strategy with the teacher providing scaffolded assistance.	• The teacher provides as much support and assistance as needed, and may write collaboratively for some period of time with any student who needs this level of assistance. • Individual goal setting can be used to help students develop independence with the strategy.
6. Independent Performance	Students use the strategy with little or no support.	• Prompts, interaction, and guidance are faded at a pace appropriate to individual students. These steps are now "in your head."

Steps for Teaching Writing Strategies		
Stage	**Description**	**Additional Information**
		• Plans for maintenance and generalization are planned and implemented. These include booster sessions over time.

* Based on Self-Regulated Strategies Development (SRSD) Model.

Strategy instruction can be effective with all types of students, including special education students and ELs, but it is critical that teachers find ways to respond to their **unique learning needs**. Many students may require more intense and explicit instruction to learn essential writing strategies. Teachers should consider the following to respond to unique learning needs:

✓ Provide additional explanation about the strategy, its component parts, and how it works.

✓ Pre-teach prerequisite skills and processes needed to use the strategy before teaching the strategy instructing.

✓ Model again how to use and apply the steps within the strategy as needed.

✓ Extend the use of mnemonic devices, think sheets, and charts to help students remember the steps of the strategy.

✓ Provide extended feedback and support as students practice using the strategy.

✓ Use instruction based on criteria for *mastery* learning rather than time-constrained criteria.

Use Graphic Organizers

Planning sheets, prompt cards, or think sheets are graphic organizers that make the unseen aspects of writing (e.g., writing process, genre-specific text structure) visible to students. Graphic organizers are tools that help students plan and execute writing through a series of sequential and structured prompts with the purpose of reminding students of the thinking strategies and dialogue that good writers use. Below is a sample Think Sheet for writing a sequential explanation paragraph:

How to Write an Explanation Paragraph		
What is being explained?	**Topic**	
	Materials/Things you Need	
	Setting	
What are the steps?	**First**	
	Next	
	Third	
	Then	
	Last	

Recommendations for using graphic organizers include:

✓ Use graphic organizers strategically! **Pick a few**, powerful graphic organizers that students can use consistently throughout the writing process. Overall, instructional time should focus on how to use a few graphic organizers consistently and well, not on the use of many different graphic organizers.

✓ **Align content** on the graphic organizers with critical features of the writing process, writing strategy, and/or genre (e.g., argument/opinion/persuasive, informational/explanatory, narrative). For example, when teaching young elementary students to write argument text, include icons for "like" and "dislike" on the graphic organizer. For upper elementary grade students, there might be a reminder box on the graphic organizer with clauses like "in my opinion," "I think," "for example," and "some reasons are."

✓ Select graphic organizers based on the **purpose** of the writing instruction and student need. There's no single, best graphic organizer.

✓ Promote student independence with writing by "**fading"** the use of graphic organizers over time. Research indicates that highly effective teachers provide *just enough support* based on individual students' needs to enable students' steady progress (Roberts & Wibbens, 2010). As students gain independence with the writing process and use of writing strategies, graphic organizers are faded. For example, the table below shows a highly prompted note sheet that might be used in the initial phases of narrative writing instruction and a less prompted note sheet that might be used as use of the graphic organizer is faded. The highly prompted note sheet includes a list of story grammar components. Each story grammar component is defined. Planning and note taking space is also provided for each component. On the less prompted note sheet, the story grammar components are simply listed at the top of the page.

Highly Prompted	Less Prompted
Story Note Sheet Setting – where and when the story took place Main Character (protagonist) – the person or persons whom the problem/conflict revolves around Character Clues – appearance, actions, dialogue, comments of others, thoughts Problem/Conflicts Attempts – how the characters try to solve the problem Resolution – how the problem gets solved or does not get solved	**Story Elements** Setting Problem Conclusion Main Character Attempts Theme Character Clues Resolution

*From Dickson, S. V., Chard, D. J., & Simmons, D. C. (1993). An integrated reading/writing curriculum: A focus on scaffolding. *LD Forum, 18(4),* 12-16.

Emphasize Strategies for Planning and Revising

Planning and revising are recognized as the most difficult parts of the writing process for students (Graham & Harris, 2009). Many students view writing as a content-generation task and compose by drawing on a relevant idea, writing it down, and using each preceding sentence to come up with the next idea. In essence, there is no planning when students write from idea to idea. When revising, many students generally focus on correcting spelling and grammar errors. Few word changes or content-level revisions are made.

Recommendations for instruction on planning and revising include:

Planning

- ✓ Use graphic organizers as planning tools.

- ✓ Align planning tools with critical features of text structure.

- ✓ Teach how to organize ideas on their plan (e.g., cross-out ideas that won't be used, connect ideas that go together, number ideas in the order they will be discussed).

- ✓ Show students how to write from their plan and translate planning ideas to written text.

Revising

✓ Model how to read and evaluate a composition on a *flawed* version of a teacher-written sample. Flaws can include something irrelevant that can be crossed out, wording that can be changed, and/or something missing that could be added to make the writing clearer or more interesting.

✓ Practice editing and revising collaboratively.

✓ Create a system to identify which edits and revisions will be incorporated into the final draft (e.g., a star is placed next to each suggestion that will be revised).

✓ Use goal setting during the revision process (e.g., use clear, specific goals to set a focus of revision).

✓ Explicitly teach a specific strategy focused on what to do when revising. For example, a revise strategy that prompts what to do and look for when revising by Archer, Gleason, & Isaacson (2003):

   o Sound good?

   o Combine

   o Omit or Move

   o Replace

   o Expand

✓ Use a critical features edit/revise checklist to guide the revision process. The example below is aligned with the critical features used in the highly prompted/prompted example above (See recommendations for using graphic organizers section).

Narrative Edit/Revise Sheet

Edit/Revise Checklist

✓ Check 1: Are major IDEAS included in my writing?   ☑ CHECK BOX if OK

	Self Check	Partner Check
1. Setting	❑	❑
2. Main Character	❑	❑
3. Character Clues	❑	❑
4. Problem/Conflict	❑	❑
5. Attempts	❑	❑
6. Resolution	❑	❑
7. Conclusion	❑	❑
8. Theme (Optional)	❑	❑

✓ Check 2: Order/Organization	✓ Check 3: Grammar, punctuation, spelling, and teacher's choice
Does order make sense? ☑ CHECK BOX if OK	☑ CHECK BOX if OK
Self Check ❑ Partner Check ❑	Self Check ❑ Partner Check ❑
If organization is not OK, put a (?) mark in the rough draft where order does not make sense.	If not OK, circle things in the rough draft that you need to change.

Revise – How can I improve my paper? You and your partner decide the parts you need to change and list below.

*From Dickson, S. V., Chard, D. J., & Simmons, D. C. (1993). An integrated reading/writing curriculum: A focus on scaffolding. *LD Forum, 18(4),* 12-16.

Additional recommendations for teaching revising are discussed in the next section on the use of teacher-facilitated discussion and peer collaboration.

Structured Feedback, Peer Collaboration, Discourse about Writing

Provide quality, structured feedback to individual students, develop and teach a process for peer collaboration, and use teacher-facilitated discussions to build on-going, purposeful classroom discourse about writing.

Interactive dialogue between teachers and students, and among students with their peers, is an important factor that can enhance the quality of students' writing (Baker, Gersten, & Scanlon, 2002). The K-12 Common Core State Standards emphasize in Writing Standard 5 the importance of interactive dialogue and use of teacher and peer feedback across writing genres and grade levels. Each grade-specific Writing Standard 5 begins "With guidance and support from adults and peers…" or a variation of that phrase.

A purposeful, interactive dialogue about writing consistently provides opportunities for both teachers and students to provide comments, share thoughts, note problems, and discuss specific strengths of written compositions. When interactive dialogue is integrated in writing instruction, substantive improvement in students' overall writing quality is observed (Baker, Gersten, & Graham, 2003). What appears to be most important about interactive dialogue is the degree to which feedback is *elaborate, specific, and explicit* (Wong, Butler, Ficzere, & Kuperis, 1996). Although research on the use of classroom dialogue to promote writing is still emerging, it is recommended that *elaborate, specific, and explicit* feedback also be provided to English learners, particularly feedback related to vocabulary choice and syntax.

There are *two* important considerations when integrating interactive dialogue into writing instruction and providing elaborate, specific, and explicit feedback:

1. Conduct on-going, structured teacher-student conferences to establish writing goals and self-evaluation criteria, provide individualized feedback, and discuss overall progress.

2. Develop and explicitly teach students a process for peer collaboration.

Each of the two considerations is discussed in more detail below.

Structure Feedback, Collaboration, and Discussion about Writing

A variety of techniques can be used to enhance the quality of teacher feedback during teacher-student writing conferences. Two effective techniques for improving the quality of student writing are discussed below.

First, teachers should help students set specific goals for the writing task they are to complete and then provide ongoing feedback to help students meet these goals. Setting specific product goals is one of the eleven key elements of adolescent writing instruction identified in the Carnegie Corporation's report *Writing Next (*Graham & Perin, 2007)*.* In contrast to goals related to task completion, product goals should be specific to the purpose of the writing assignment as well as aligned with the critical features or components of the final writing product (Schunk, 2003). Product goal setting is especially important for ELs and students who struggle learning to write. To demonstrate the concept of product goals, a sample goal-setting strategy is illustrated below:

Goal-Setting Example: General and Elaborated Goals for Writing a Persuasive Essay
Step 1:   Before writing, the teacher asks the students to take a position on a controversial topic and write a paper to persuade their readers to agree with them (general goal).
Step 2: Before writing, the teacher also asks the students to be sure to include a statement of their belief, two or three reasons for their belief, examples or supporting information for each reason, two or three reasons why others might disagree, and why those reasons are wrong (elaborated subgoals).
Step 3: The teacher assigns the topic and reminds the students to use the general and elaborated goals to write a convincing paper.
Step 4: After reading the paper, the teacher provides each student with feedback on goals. (Feedback on goal attainment is essential if goal setting is to maintain its effects over time.)

Goal-Setting Example: General and Elaborated Goals for Writing a Persuasive Essay

General Goal:

❑ Take a position on the assigned topic and write a paper that persuades the reader that you are right.

Elaborated Goals: Include

❑ A statement that says why you believe

❑ Two or three reasons that support your belief

❑ Examples or supporting information for each reason

❑ Two or three reasons why others might disagree

❑ A statement about why these reasons are wrong

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*Adapted From *Writing Better: Effective Strategies for Teaching Students with Learning Difficulties,* by S Graham and K. R. Harris, p. 146. Copyright 2005 Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Inc. Permission for Reproduction Needed.

Goal setting can also be used as a basis for discussion during the revision process. For example, teachers can set a goal that three new ideas should be added to a composition or focus revisions on making a specific section of a paper more persuasive. Another product goal that could be used during the revision process might be the deletion of all sentences that repeat ideas. For ELs, goals could involve the development of academic English such as the conjugation of verbs. Overall, when goals are specific as possible it helps struggling writers recognize problematic areas within their own writing. Product goals should be set collaboratively, with the student taking primary responsibility to ensure that goals are met. Teachers should also use writing conference time as an opportunity for a continual feedback loop – goals are set, progress toward goals is discussed, met goals are reviewed, new goals are set.

Second, teachers should provide feedback using a combination of interactive dialogue and procedural facilitators such as plans of action, think sheets and/or detailed rubrics specific to a genre, which provide an important basis for creating a shared vocabulary and common understanding (Baker, Gersten, & Graham, 2003). Teachers can use the same steps within a strategy as a basis for *providing feedback* on the writing composition. For example, if a genre-specific strategy is used to identify the who, what, where, when, why, and how characteristics for an explanatory essay during the planning process, then the same who, what, where, when, why, and how characteristics can be used on an edit checklist or rubric for revision. Below are two examples of teacher-created feedback using checklists/rubrics.

Example Checklist/Rubric for Providing Feedback
Example 1: Factual Paragraph

0 1 2 3 4 5	1. Does the first sentence tell the topic of the paragraph?
0 1 2 3 4 5	2. Do the remaining sentences give supporting details about the topic?
0 1 2 3 4 5	3. Is the information presented in a logical order?
0 1 2 3 4 5	4. Are linking words used to connect ideas where appropriate?
0 1 2 3 4 5	5. Is the paragraph easy to understand?

No   **Yes**
<u>0 1 2</u>   3 4 5
Fix-Up Zone

Example Checklist/Rubric for Providing Feedback
Example 2: COPS Editing Strategy

C – Capitalization

Are the first words in each sentence as well as the proper names capitalized?

O - Overall

How is the overall appearance and readability (i.e., spacing, legibility, Indentation of paragraphs, neatness, complete sentences, etc.)?

P - Punctuation

Is the punctuation correct?

S - Spelling

Are all the words spelled correctly?

*Credit given to Dr. Anita Archer.

It would be unproductive to simply hand a student a plan of action, checklist, or rubric, and expect him/her to use these tools independently. Rather, it is the *quality of interactive discussion* around these checklists that enhances students' writing and creates self-regulated writers.

The Six-Trait writing framework is another type of evaluation and teaching framework. Although useful in general, the number of components on the Six-Trait framework may overwhelm many students who cannot simultaneously focus on many elements at once –this is especially true for young writers, special needs students, and ELs. A more manageable strategy is the initial use of specific criteria focused around a genre and writing conventions (MacArthur, 2007). As students' writing matures, teachers can then focus on particular writing elements such as word choice, voice, and sentence variety.

Teach Process for Peer Collaboration

Collaborative arrangements have a strong positive impact on the quality of students' writing because writing is a social activity best learned in a community (Boscolo & Ascorti, 2004; Graham & Perin, 2007; MacArthur, Schwartz, & Graham, 1991). Writing practice alone does not improve writing quality; rather, peers' and teachers' criteria-based responses improve writing (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2007). Peer groups' benefits also include a nonthreatening audience, immediate feedback, development of positive attitudes about writing, and motivation to revise. Not only do the writers gain insight into composing and revising their *own* writing, the peer responders benefit by analyzing the text of *others* and becoming knowledgeable about what is important in writing.

It is critically important *a risk-free environment* is created for peer collaboration, especially for struggling students. Positive delivery of feedback and suggestions is essential. At both the elementary and secondary levels, when students are asked to engage in peer evaluation without specific guidance, they are often reluctant to criticize each other or are unable to provide significant help because their evaluation and revision skills are limited (Dipardo & Freedman, 1988). As a result, teachers should model a process for peer collaboration that addresses topics including the responsibilities of the writer and peer at the conference, methods to assist a peer's writing efforts, and students' feelings about giving and receiving

criticism and praise. **Overall, the process for peer collaboration should be modeled *before* asking students to participate in a peer review and collaboration process.**

Below are two examples of structures for peer collaboration. Again, teachers should model and practice a strategy *before* asking students to engage in peer collaboration.

Example 1 - Peer Revision Strategy: PQP

(K-8 Access Center)

This PQP revising strategy is appropriate for a second round of revision and editing during which students work with one another. The prompt sheet indicates that a peer editor is to first read the author's paper and mark those parts of the paper that are imaginative, unusual, interesting, and confusing. Then, the peer editor praises the author for the positive aspects and questions the author about the confusing parts. The peer makes suggestions for how the paper can be improved and gives back the original, marked copy to the author. Finally, the author addresses the confusing parts marked on the paper and, if desired, makes changes suggested by the peer editor. Whenever a student elects to not make a requested or suggested modification, the student should be expected to adequately justify that decision.

Praise (Peer Editor)

- ❑ Mark each section of the author's paper that is imaginative with a star.
- ❑ Put a box around the most unusual or interesting words in the paper.
- ❑ Underline at least one part you think others should be able to read because you like it so much.
- ❑ Put a question mark next to any part you thought was confusing.
- ❑ Share your stars, boxes, and underlined parts with the author.

Question (Peer Editor)

- ❑ Ask the author what her or his goals were for the paper.
- ❑ Share your questions about the confusing parts.
- ❑ Give suggestions for ideas to add or changes to make.
- ❑ Give back the copy of the paper to the author.

Polish (Author)

- ❑ Decide if you met your writing goals.
- ❑ Identify the suggestions your peer editor gave that you will use.
- ❑ Address the question marks on your paper.
- ❑ Make changes to your paper that improves it.

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*From *Powerful Writing Strategies,* by K. R. Harris, S Graham, L. H. Mason, & B. Friedlander, p. 333. Copyright 2008 Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Example 2 - Peer Revising Strategy: SRSD Peer Revision Strategy

This peer revision strategy includes two parts: one in which revising focuses on substance (Revise) and a second in which revision concentrates on mechanical issues (Edit). The steps for Revise and Edit are written from the perspective of the listener. It is best to first teach students Revise, and once they have mastered this process, Edit is taught.

Peer Revising Checklist				
Part 1. Revising	☑	**Notes**	**Part 2. Proofreading**	☑
Listen and READ			CHECK your paper and correct errors.	
TELL what the paper is about.			EXCHANGE papers and check for errors in:	
TELL what you liked best.			SENTENCES	
READ and make NOTES Is everything CLEAR?			CAPITALS	
			PUNCTUATION	
Can any details be added?			SPELLING	
			DISCUSS corrections.	

*From *Powerful Writing Strategies,* by K. R. Harris, S Graham, L. H. Mason, & B. Friedlander, p. 333. Copyright 2008 Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

Organizing Principle 3: Explicitly Teach the Specific Discourse Knowledge Needed for Writing Development

Writing requires the knowledge of written discourse and an understanding about what constitutes good writing (Olinghouse & Graham, 2009). For example, what makes a written argument a good written argument? What makes the writing of the written argument understandable to the reader? Is the writing clearly produced (e.g., handwritten, typed) and expressed using conventions of written English (e.g., spelling, grammar)? Are words used appropriately in context and do the words convey appropriate meaning (e.g., word choice, vocabulary)? Writing communicates, and students need to learn the discourse used to communicate with written expression. CCR Anchor Writing Standard 4 (*Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience)* includes many writing elements related to the development of discourse knowledge.

Discourse Knowledge

Overall, there are four areas of discourse knowledge that require explicit instruction:

- Explicitly teach genre-specific text structure and how to write within a genre, across all grade levels.

- Integrate foundational- and higher-level writing skills and strategies in writing instruction.

- Explicitly teach fluent transcription skills, such as handwriting and keyboarding, and technology use related to the production of writing.

- Explicitly teach linguistic features of written English, including spelling, vocabulary, sentence formation and sentence-combining to enhance writing quality.

Teach Genre-specific Text Structure across Grade Levels

Different types of writing or genres each follow a specific **text structure**. There are unique structural elements, rules, and established patterns of writing for each genre. Argument writing persuades and expresses opinion. **Argument** text structure includes positions, reasons, and conclusions. **Informational/ explanatory** writing conveys information and includes text structure that names, defines, describes, and/or compares and contrasts. **Narrative** writing, for example, conveys experience, either real or imaginary, and uses time as its deep structure. There are characters, a sequence of events, plot, setting, and themes to consider.

The CCR Anchor Writing Standards 1-3 focus on the development of argumentative/opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative writing beginning in Kindergarten. Each genre-specific text structure can be taught at varying levels of complexity. For example, in kindergarten, argument writing might begin with discussions of likes and dislikes, and a simple sentence frame might be used for students to write or draw an idea (e.g., I like_____.). In upper grades, argument writing becomes more complex with examples and reasons used to support assertions and the use of other text-sources or data for supporting evidence.

While the K-12 CCSS for Writing call for argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative to be taught at every grade levels (Writing Standards 1-3), the expectations for writing outcomes – including the level of detail and amount of writing – increase with grade level. As an example, Standard 1, Argument, at Grade 2 is stated as follows:

Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., because, and, also) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Whereas Standard 1, Argument, at Grade 11-12 calls for students to develop argumentative writing skills as follows:

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

2. Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

3. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

4. Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

5. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

6. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

The requirements for Standard 1, Argument, increase gradually from Kindergarten through each grade to prepare students to exit high school proficient in writing argument papers and without need for remediation in college or the work place.

As requirements increase, so can the sophistication of the strategies used to teach writing within that genre. The following chart illustrates the use of different strategies for helping students organize opinion/persuasive writing with varying levels of complexity:

Opinion/Persuasive Writing Strategy Across Grades

(1) Early Grades: TREE		
Topic Sentence	**Tell what you believe!**	
Reasons (3 or more)	**Why do I believe this? Will my readers believe this?**	**1.**
		2.
		3.
Ending	**Wrap it up right!**	
Examine	**Do I have all my parts?**	**Yes** _____ **No** _____

*From *Powerful Writing Strategies,* by K. R. Harris, S Graham, L. H. Mason, & B. Friedlander, p. 183. Copyright 2008. Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

(2) Later Elementary: TREE with Elaboration		
Topic Sentence	**Tell what you believe!**	
Reasons (3 or more)	**Why do I believe this? Will my readers believe this?**	**1.**
		2.
		3.
Explain Reasons	**(Say more about each reason)**	
Ending	**Wrap it up right!**	

*From *Powerful Writing Strategies,* by K. R. Harris, S Graham, L. H. Mason, & B. Friedlander, p. 186. Copyright 2008. Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

(3) Middle School and High School: STOP and DARE	
Suspend Judgment	Consider each side before taking a position. Brainstorm ideas for and against the topic.
Take a Side	Read your ideas. Decide which side you believe in or which side can be used to make the strongest argument. Place a "+" on the side that shows your position.
Organize Ideas	Choose ideas that are strong and decide how to organize them for writing. To help you do this, (a) Put a star next to the ideas you want to use. Choose at least ___ ideas. (b) Choose at least ___ arguments to refute; and (c) Number your ideas in the order you will use them.
Plan More as You Write	Continue to plan as you write. Use all four essay parts of DARE.
Develop Your Topic Sentence	
Add Supporting Ideas	
Reject Arguments for the Other Side	
End with a Conclusion	

*From *Powerful Writing Strategies,* by K. R. Harris, S Graham, L. H. Mason, & B. Friedlander, p. 222. Copyright 2008. Paul H Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.

In the **early elementary**, many different genres are introduced to students through reading**.** The practice of reading a variety of books to young children, for example, has been shown to support student acquisition of genre knowledge (Donovan & Smolkin, 2006), and, **as genre grows, so does children's ability to apply that knowledge to their own writing.** In fact, some research has shown that by kindergarten, the foundation of written genre knowledge is often established, apparent in students' scribbles and other unconventionally-produced written and abbreviated texts (Donovan, 2001; Kamberelis, 1998; Pappas, 1993). As a result, exposure to *all types of print* should be provided in the elementary grades. School and classroom libraries should be filled with texts of all types, and different genres should be integrated into curriculum units and included in classroom discussions. Once students become acquainted with the text structures within different genres, they can "do a turnabout" and employ this knowledge in their own beginning writing tasks.

Genre Instruction in the **elementary grades** includes the **critical features of each text type**. Instruction focuses on the foundational aspects of writing.

Genre Instruction in **upper elementary through secondary** grades focuses increasingly on students writing for a variety of audiences and purposes. Overall, teaching different stages of the writing process across different genres adds the necessary structure and depth to the writing instruction. Audience and purpose expands throughout the years both for language arts requirements and in the content areas. In addition, students must also be prepared to write for various reasons including communicating professionally and socially, reflecting on experiences, and building relationships with others. Writing for different purposes and audiences requires variety in form, structure, and production processes, some which are genre-specific. Teaching forms and structures across genres is critical.

Developing a school *Writing Plan* aligned to the K-12 Common Core State Standards (CCSS), which identifies the writing strategies that will be used to teach genres across the grade levels, provides coherence and continuity to writing instruction.

Use Explicit Instruction

Emerging, experimental research on genre-specific writing instruction suggests that explicit teaching can show students how to write within a specific genre. The purpose of explicit instruction is to make the text structure and genre features, structures, rules, and patterns visible to students. Explicit instruction also models how writers think when writing and what features make writing good within a specific genre. Overall, the use of explicit instruction to teach the genre features of argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative structure (Common Core Writing Standards 1-3 in grades K-12) improves students' understanding of and ability to write in those genres (Donovan & Smolkin, 2008).

Example: Instructional Model for Teaching Writing Genres

Clarify and Teach Necessary Preskills – reflect on what prior knowledge is required to use the genre. Review and teach the pre-skills as necessary. For example, for the genre of a descriptive paragraph:

• Can the student write a complete sentence?
• Can the student write sentences that include adjectives to describe nouns?
• Can the student write a paragraph with a topic sentence and related sentences?
• Can the student use basic mechanics such as capitalization, punctuation and spelling?
• Is the student familiar with the vocabulary needed to work with the genre?

2. **Determine the Critical Attributes of the Genre**
 (a) Determine the critical attributes of the genre
 (b) Turn the attributes into a rubric
   • Write the critical attributes as questions.
   • Add an evaluation scale. Include an absolute zero for nothing present.
   Example: **Descriptive Paragraph Rubric**

NO	YES
0 1 2	3 4 5

Fix-Up Zone

0 1 2 3 4 5	1. Does the first sentence tell what is being described?
0 1 2 3 4 5	2. Do the other sentences tell more about what is being described?
0 1 2 3 4 5	3. Are descriptive words used?
0 1 2 3 4 5	4. Are the sentences in logical order?
0 1 2 3 4 5	5. Does the paragraph paint a clear and accurate picture of what is being described?
0 1 2 3 4 5	6. Is the description easy for the reader to understand?

3. **Use the Rubric to Teach the Genre**
   (a) Use a prime example of the genre to analyze and teach the attributes:
      • Read the example together. Introduce rubric to show students why it is an example.
      • Read rubric elements one by one. Check against the example, mark, and score together and discuss why.
   (b) Use several examples and non-examples to firm up concepts within the rubric.
   (c) Model the writing process for the genre using the rubric and/or a mnemonic or think sheet as a guide.
   (d) Provide guided practice by completing a similar writing task together.
   (e) Assign writing task with teacher providing scaffolding for composition, revising, and editing of the written products through conferencing and mini-lessons for students with same needs.
   (f) Ask students to self-evaluate using the rubric.
   (g) Teacher evaluates and provides final feedback.

To provide consistency for students within a school, the same process and steps to teach different genres should be consistent and coordinated across grades and classrooms. One example of an organized process for teaching different genres is illustrated below.

Note that **explicit instruction employs the use of models and examples** to show what good writing looks like for different genres. The national *Writing Next* report on effective strategies for middle and high school students, for example, identifies the study of models as one of **the most effective strategies for improving adolescent writing**. Students analyze excellent examples and emulate the critical elements, patterns, and forms in their own writing.

The chart below illustrates how explicitly teaching the writing process (Organizing Principle 2) and explicitly teaching genre-specific writing (Organizing Principle 3) can be integrated into a **cohesive instructional model**. When reviewing the chart, notice how the discussion of models and examples is included as an instructional step in the sequence of explicit instruction. Also note how the generic features of the writing process (e.g., planning, writing, revising) apply across genres and how genre-specific instruction is used within the context of the writing process.

Teaching the Writing Process for Genre-Specific Text Types			
Explicit Instruction	**Writing Genres**		
	Argument	**Informational/Explanatory**	**Narrative**
Step 1: Discuss models and examples *What makes _____ (genre) writing good? What critical features do good writers use? How to writers think when writing _____ (genre) text?	Provide exemplars. Delineate critical features. Discuss and "test" student knowledge of critical features.		
Step 2: Plan and Organize *(See more complete explanation following this table.) Sample planning sheets are listed for each genre. Select one planning sheet appropriate for purpose of instruction and student learning needs. Critical features highlighted during Step 1 are incorporated into the selected planning sheet. Create 3 plans to use for Steps 3-5. Model how to plan (Plan 1); guide students in planning (Plan 2); provide independent practice time for planning (Plan 3). Note the same planning sheet/template should be used to create Plans 1-3.	Outline Think Sheet	Adjective Chain Sense Chart Active Verb List Outline Think Sheet Map or Web Noun Organizer Sequential Pattern Chart Enumeration Frame Reaction Frame Etc.	Story Frame Story Grammar Map Sequential Picture Frame Story Board

Teaching the Writing Process for Genre-Specific Text Types			
Explicit Instruction	**Writing Genres**		
	Argument	**Informational/Explanatory**	**Narrative**
Step 3: Write (Demonstrate) *Demonstrate writing from Plan 1.	Teacher shows step-by-step how to translate planning sheet into sentences.		
Step 4: Write (Guided Practice) *Provide guided practice with Plan 2.	Teacher guides students in translating planning sheet into sentences.		
Step 5: Write (Independent Writing – First Drafts) *Provide time for independent practice as students write independently from Plan 3.	Students attempt translation independently.		
Step 6: Edit and Revise *Split Edit and Revise into multiple steps if Model, Guided Practice, and Independent Practice phases of instruction are required.	Check writing against edit/revise criteria. (Edit/revise criteria reflect genre-specific critical features discussed in Stage 1 and incorporated into plans developed in Stage 2)		
Step 7: Re-Write (Independent Writing – Final Drafts) *Split Edit and Revise into multiple steps if Model, Guided Practice, and Independent Practice phases of instruction are required.	Write final drafts.		
Step 8: Proofread/Final Edit	Model a strategy for proofreading the final draft and correcting mechanical errors (e.g., Check to make sure sentences make sense, check for capitals, check for punctuation, check for spelling)		
Step 9: Publish	Decide what will be published (e.g., typed, made in book form, displayed on a bulletin board, assembled into a yearbook or class literacy journal). **Not all work needs to be published.**		

*Modified from Archer and Gleason (1989) and Gleason (1996).

There are two final observations related to the table above. **First, notice how *three* planning drafts (Step 2) were developed before writing instruction began (Steps 3-5).** The first plan was not used for writing until two more plans for different compositions were developed by the class collaboratively (guided practice) and by individual students (independent practice). That way, three plans were prepared for the

demonstration (Plan1), guided practice (Plan 2), and independent writing (Plan 3) steps of instruction. Many writers have work in different stages of development. For example, as educators, we might have a letter to parents about a field trip completed while letters to parents about classroom volunteering and conferences are still in draft form. As stated earlier, there are many ways to sequence the writing process. **It is recommended that sequencing steps be based on instructional purpose (i.e., *planning* an opinion essay) and student learning needs.** For example, if the instructional purpose is teaching how to plan an opinion essay the plan and organize step might require expanded instruction with a step focused specifically on planning and an additional instructional step focused specifically on organizing. Proofread, final edit, and publish might not be addressed in the instructional sequence or might become consolidated as one instructional step.

Second, the above illustrates how more extensive explicit instruction can be integrated into any phase of the writing process. For example, if students needed more instruction in how to edit and revise, the edit and revise stage could be split into multiple steps for demonstration, guided practice, and independent practice.

The following summarizes some recommendations to consider when teaching writing across various genres:

- ✓ Use models and examples of writing samples.

- ✓ Coordinate genre instruction across teachers, grades, and subjects aligned to the K-12 Writing CCSS.

- ✓ Share "touchstone" texts that exemplify the structure and valued genre traits. Repeated readings of these texts may be necessary for younger students and older struggling writers.

- ✓ Explicitly develop students' understanding of the genre structure. A graphic aid or mnemonic device can be very helpful to many writers – including students receiving special education and ELs.

- ✓ Provide students with graphic organizers for planning their texts (as discussed in Organizing Principle 2).

- ✓ Identify and teach key vocabulary/phrases that will be useful for the genre and subject of writing tasks. Genre instruction can be used in combination with content area instruction.

- ✓ Give students time to explore potential ideas for writing through reflection, discussion, and research.

- ✓ Allow enough time for students to proceed through multiple iterations of revising and editing, but yet have time to write a number of different products that go with a specific genre.

   * Modified from *Teaching Writing to Diverse Student Population,* The Access Center: Improving Outcomes for All Students K-8, U.S Office of Special Education Programs.

Explicitly Teach, and Integrate, Foundational and Higher Skills

Integrate foundational skills and strategies in writing instruction, and explicitly teach fluent transcription skills, such as handwriting and keyboarding, and technology use related to the production of writing

In addition to an understanding of genre-specific text structure, effective writing also requires understanding how English writing works in the more basic production of text (i.e., handwriting, typing), word-level spelling, and sentence-level mechanics. Most importantly, **efficient use of higher-level writing**

strategies to plan, generate, and revise differing text types requires fluent foundational skills such as handwriting, word processing, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and access to appropriate vocabulary (Graham & Perin, 2007). This concept is similar to the way within a reading framework that reading comprehension depends, in part, on the fluent decoding of text.

   Difficulty with foundational writing skills undermines the writing process in three ways (Graham & Harris, 2009). **First**, having to switch attention to mechanical concerns while writing (e.g. how to spell a word or form a letter) may cause a student to lose ideas in working memory. **Second**, content may be lost if a student's writing (or word processing) is not fast enough to keep up with his or her thoughts. **Finally**, opportunities to conceptualize and refine are reduced when mechanical concerns require focus. **Therefore, students must *develop fluency* when employing foundational-level writing skills.** Standards related to foundational writing skills and discourse knowledge in general can be found in K-12 CCSS for Language, Standards 1 though 6. To experience the importance of foundational skills during composition, try the simulation in the box below.

Simulation

For the purpose of this simulation, you will compose a written response to a writing prompt. You will also write by hand with a pencil or pen – no typing or other production technology can be used. As soon as you start writing, begin timing yourself for 3-minutes and stop writing at the 3-minute point. Here is your writing prompt:

My favorite thing about vacation is. . .

Before you write, follow the steps below (Please focus on one Step at a time. Do not look ahead at other Steps until a Step is completed).

(Step 1) Re-read the prompt and briefly think about and plan what you want to write. [Give yourself 2- to 5-minutes at most for planning]

(Step 2) Switch your pen or pencil to your non-dominant hand.

(Step 3) Ready? (No "quick" practicing with your non-dominant hand!) **Begin writing.** [Time yourself for 3-minutes]

(Step 4) **Stop** writing at the 3-minute point.

(Step 6) Answer the reflection questions below.

Reflection Questions

✓ What was your composing experience like when writing with your non-dominant hand?

✓ Did you have trouble with handwriting production, spelling, or grammar?

✓ Did you simplify the vocabulary you used (i.e., perhaps you decided to use shorter words?)

✓ Did you stop before the 3-minutes ended? If so, did stopping have anything to do with frustration or maybe the laborious process of writing?

✓ How much of your writing plan, thought about during the brief pre-writing think time, were you able to *fully* articulate?

Simulation
✓ What were some of your other observations about how writing with your non-dominant hand impacted the quality of your composition? ✓ (If you are a proficient ambidextrous writer, the simulation probably didn't work as intended). Remember, this was only a contrived simulation that may not fully represent the experience students have when employing foundational and higher-level processes when writing. For our purpose of general discussion, however, were you able to experience how slow, laborious production of foundational skills could impact composition? In other words, perhaps your memory and attention may have been focused on trying to produce text with your non-dominant hand, rather than directed to how your ideas about vacation could be expressed in an organized, cohesive, interesting, and creative manner. **The lesson from the simulation:** Students need instruction and opportunities to develop foundational skill fluency as part of their overall writing instruction. Writing requires discourse knowledge of *both* foundational and higher-level skills and strategies.

Integrate Foundational and Higher-level Skills and Strategies in Writing Instruction

Research suggests an **integration of foundational and higher-level skills** in writing instruction (e.g., Berninger, 1995, 1999; Graham & Perin, 2007). For example, a writing lesson might begin with a **"warm-up"** focused on foundational skills followed by explicit instruction focused on higher-level aspects of writing such as strategy use during the writing process (Organizing Principle 2) or genre-specific strategy instruction (Organizing Principle 3 – see above). Instructional warm-ups of foundational skills might include explicit instruction *and* fluency practice of handwriting, spelling, or vocabulary that students might use during subsequent higher-level composing.

The idea of using instructional "warm-ups" for foundational skills can be used across grades K-12. In fact, the concept of writing "warm-ups" for foundational skills is analogous to a musician practicing scales or playing a few measures multiple times in a challenging classical piece of music, a photographer learning how to manually set the shutter and aperture of the camera, or a professional athlete working out in the gym and practicing skill drills on the court or playing field. In other words, just like athletes need to develop the skills of their sport before playing with skill, talent, and finesse in the game, writers need to develop the skills and knowledge of written discourse before composing with skill, talent, and finesse. **The use of committed practice and "warm-ups" is universal – it doesn't matter if you are a student in elementary, middle, or high school, an adult learner, or professional athlete** (See Tim McCarver's discussion of practice in the box below).

> *"Baseball fans may not realize that some fielding plays look easy only because of the preparation involved. As Hall of Fame football receiver Don Hutson once said, "For every catch I make in a game, I've made a thousand catches in practice."*
>
> -Tim McCarver, *Tim McCarver's Baseball for Brain Surgeons and Other Fans*

Before discussing some of the foundational-level skills in more detail, a potential misconception about "warm-up" needs to be clarified. Foundational skill "warm-ups" are *not* always short in time. Time spent on foundational-level skills instruction depends on purpose and student needs. Sometimes the "warm-up" component of a lesson might require more time – just like the more extensive time dedicated athletes commit to practice. Sometimes the "warm-up" might consist of a brief skill review before the athletes play the game and the writers compose and write. Overall, however, **writing instruction should include both foundational-level and higher-level components of writing**.

Explicitly Teach Handwriting and Keyboarding Skills

Even with current and future emphasis on technology, handwriting instruction should *not* be ignored. The K-12 CCSS for Writing does not specifically address handwriting because handwriting cuts across all aspects of literacy. In fact, handwriting is more connected to academic achievement more than many educators may realize (Berninger et al., 2006; Christensen, 2005). For example, handwriting is a predictive factor in determining the length and quality of compositions (Baker, Gersten, & Graham, 2003). If children have difficulty forming letters with reasonable legibility and speed, they cannot translate the language in their minds into written text. Struggling with handwriting can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy in which students avoid writing, come to think of themselves as not being able to write, and fall farther and farther behind their peers (Graham, 2010). Consequently, **primary teachers should provide students with formal handwriting instruction.**

A 2009 national survey of first through third grade teachers' beliefs about instructional strategies for handwriting (Graham et al., 2008) found that 90% taught handwriting, devoting an average of 70 minutes a week to handwriting instruction. Of the 90% of teachers who taught handwriting, only 39% said their students' handwriting was adequate, and just 46% indicated their students' handwriting was fast enough to keep up with classroom demands. A mere 12% reported that their college education courses provided adequate preparation to teach handwriting.

A list of general recommendations for teaching handwriting effectively is listed below (Troia & Graham, 2003):

- ✓ In the primary grades, allot 75-100 minutes per week in short sessions for handwriting instruction. Directly teaching handwriting skills enhances legibility and fluency.

- ✓ Explicitly model, practice and review letter formation, pencil grip, and paper positioning.

- ✓ Provide students with facilitative supports for attaining legible handwriting such as numbered arrows that depict correct letter stroke sequences, verbal descriptions of strokes, hand-over-hand physical assistance, and paper positioning marks on students' desks.

- ✓ Develop students' capacity for independently evaluating and improving their handwriting by immediately reinforcing qualitatively superior handwriting, encouraging them to keep track of their own handwriting performance, setting goals for improving handwriting, and asking them to correct poor handwriting attempts (e.g., "circle your best *m*.").

- ✓ Teach students to develop handwriting fluency by providing opportunities to write by hand and administering speed trials during which students try to copy texts 5-10% faster on successive trials.

✓ Provide additional specialized instruction for struggling writers through individual tutoring or small-group instruction.

Research also suggests that there is a high correlation between handwriting speed and typing speed. Students with fluent handwriting also tend to be fluent with typing, and students who struggle with handwriting also tend to struggle with keyboarding (Connelly, Gee, & Walsh, 2007). **The relationship between handwriting and typing makes handwriting instruction necessary despite the prevalence of computers**. Therefore, explicit instruction in *both* handwriting and keyboarding should be provided.

Explicitly Teach Word Processing and the Use of Other Technologies

The use of technology to support development of students' writing skills is emphasized in the K-12 CCSS for Writing. Writing Standard 6, for example, necessitates that students use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing, interact, and collaborate.

Word Processing

Research indicates that **word processing has a consistently positive impact on writing quality for students in grades 4 through 12** (Graham & Perin, 2007) – including average-achieving writers, at-risk learners, and students identified with learning disabilities (Karchmer-Klein, 2007) – and should be used within the classroom when appropriate. Word processing can be particularly helpful to low-achieving writers by enabling them to produce text accurately and fluently. Word processing also can increase the ease of editing which results in better revision.

The **spell checker** can be especially helpful for low-performing writers. Use of spell checkers can be encouraged as long as limitations are recognized. First, research indicates that spell checkers miss approximately one out of three spelling errors. Also, once an error is identified, the correct and intended word may not appear in the list of suggestions. Even if the correct spelling is in the list of suggestions, students may not recognize it. Finally, some words such as proper names may be falsely identified as errors. When teaching the editing and revising stages of the writing process, include proofreading as part of the explicit instruction. **Teach students *how* to proofread for spelling errors that the word processor may not identify**.

Technological tools themselves have *very little impact* on learning (including writing); rather, learning depends on **a combination of technology *and* instruction** designed to help students take advantage of the capabilities of the technology (MacArthur, 2009). Ensuring students receive instruction on keyboarding and other technological skills allow students the opportunity to take advantage of word processing. Overall, an instructional plan should **integrate word processing with writing instruction.**

The following summarizes recommendations for effective use of word processing in writing instruction:

✓ Teach students to type as fluently as they handwrite. Typing instruction software may be used. Encourage students to use correct fingering and monitor their speed and accuracy.

✓ Ask students to complete the entire writing process from planning through publication on the computer. Typing from a handwritten draft can be a tedious and error-prone process, especially for students with poor spelling skills. Provide *adequate student access to word processors.*

✓ Teach students revising strategies to take advantage of the editing capabilities of word processing, including strategies for substantive revision as well as using spell checkers for editing.

✓ Take advantage of word processing and publish student writing in a variety of formats. Publishing is one of the primary motivations for writing.

Other Technologies

Emerging technology impacts literacy through the development of new domains for writing and new forms of written communication. For example, the Internet is a highly interactive technology that encourages users to create and share content. E-mail and online chat features are commonly used for communication with friends. Web2.0 tools such as blogs and wikis expand options for writing on the Internet.

A strong writing program encourages students to **engage with new environments and forms of reading and writing on the Internet.** Unfortunately, there is limited research on the Internet's impact on literacy, writing, and writing processes (MacArthur, 2009). Teachers must therefore evaluate new communication technologies critically and proactively, not only considering how to use technology to develop effective writing skills, but also teaching students how to communicate and write effectively using these new social media.

Explicitly Teach Linguistic Features of English

Explicitly teach linguistic features of written English, including spelling, vocabulary, sentence formation and sentence-combining to enhance writing quality.

Explicitly Teach Spelling

Accurate, fluent spelling is part of the discourse knowledge required for writing. Like handwriting and keyboarding, explicit instruction is also required for spelling. Explicit spelling instruction is associated with improved spelling accuracy (Wanzek, et al., 2006). Accordingly, explicit spelling instruction should be included at the elementary level *and* a morphological, word study emphasis included at the secondary level.

Research-based procedures for teaching spelling to elementary students include (Troia & Graham, 2003):

✓ Allocate time for *daily* spelling instruction.

✓ Allot at least 60-75 minutes per week for spelling instruction.

✓ Include the explicit instruction of phoneme-grapheme associations in kindergarten and first grade, common spelling patterns in first and second grades, and patterns, morphological structures and helpful spelling rules in second grade and beyond.

✓ Teach students systematic and effective strategies for studying new spelling words.

✓ Give students ample opportunity to practice words and provide immediate feedback.

✓ Review previously taught spelling words periodically to promote retention.

✓ Establish weekly routines for spelling instruction.

✓ Provide students opportunities to generalize spelling skills to text composition.

It Is also important to note that a single-grade-level spelling book may not meet the needs of every elementary grade student. Most classes include students working at the frustration reading level and students who do well on end-of-week tests. Differentiated materials can be used to engage all students in grade-appropriate spelling instruction (Schlagal, 2007).

Students in upper elementary, middle-, high school need flexible strategies for spelling and writing longer words**.** Morphology works by showing students how words can be divided into roots and stems which contribute to the meaning and spelling of the word. **Morphological awareness** improves student writing and spelling achievement, **particularly for students who struggle with reading and writing** (Berninger, Raskind, Richards, Abbott, & Stock, 2008; Hurry, Nunes, & Bryant, 2005). Because knowledge of the role and function of morphemes is linguistically complex and required to teach the use of morphology effectively, commercially available programs should be considered for morphological awareness and word study instruction.

Explicitly Teach Vocabulary

"Words are not just words. They are the nexus – the interface – between communication and thought." (Adams, 2009, p. 180). **Writing relies on expressive vocabulary *use*.** When vocabulary is used with breadth and depth, writing is given meaning, descriptiveness, richness, and clarity. Overall, written discourse requires accuracy and quality of vocabulary knowledge and use. The CCSS recognizes the critical importance of vocabulary with integration of vocabulary throughout the standards in domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening. **The Common Core State Standards for Language emphasize expressive vocabulary *use*.** Students not only need to recognize words, analyze words, and know word meanings, they need to *use* words accurately, demonstrating their understanding of words.

Before students can use elaborated words in their expressive writing vocabulary, they need to advance through a developmental progression of understanding. The different levels of understanding for vocabulary development are listed below (Smith, 2003):

- Listening vocabulary is composed of words whose meanings are recognized when heard.

- Reading vocabulary is composed of words whose meanings are recognized when encountered during reading.

- Writing vocabulary is composed of words known well enough that they could be used in writing.

- Speaking vocabulary is composed of words used in one's speaking.

Students who have mastered a vocabulary word at one level may not have mastered the word at a different level. Reading vocabularies are usually largest, followed by listening, writing, and speaking. **Students must master the ability to understand new words through listening and reading *before* they can incorporate learned vocabulary into their own writing**. It is also important to note that while improvement in overall vocabulary skills can improve students' word choice and vocabulary use, there is *no guarantee that this will happen automatically*. Therefore, writing instruction must include explicit vocabulary instruction to teach students strategies for incorporating newly learned vocabulary into written compositions.

Research on effective practice supports an integrated model of vocabulary instruction. The Common Core State Standards and the Oregon *K-12 Literacy Framework* both support an integrated model of vocabulary instruction. Explicit vocabulary instruction is detailed in the Oregon Literacy Plan, specifically in the chapter, "K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension *in* the Common Core," pp. 45-47. Highlights from the National Reading Panel Report (2000) **guidelines on vocabulary** instruction are listed below:

- ✓ Organize lessons to include teacher modeling, supported practice, and independent practice of vocabulary selected for explicit instruction.

- ✓ Use repetition and multiple exposures to vocabulary items.

- ✓ Provide rich contexts for vocabulary learning.

- ✓ Promote active engagement in learning tasks.

- ✓ Provide incidental learning and other types of instruction such as the development of word-learning strategies.

An integrated model of vocabulary instruction also emphasizes academic language development. *All* students, particularly English learners, should receive instruction in **vocabulary** *and* **academic language**. Academic language is the vocabulary of "academic" discourse required for comprehension, communication, and overall school success. It includes the words necessary to read and expressively communicate about content-area knowledge. For example, academic language in a first grade classroom might consist of words and phrases like *follow directions, cooperation, participation, respect, retell, main idea, book report, fiction, nonfiction, index, glossary, author,* and *illustrator*. In upper-elementary, middle, and high school, academic language consists of the foundational concepts, ideas, and facts from content-area courses and instruction.

When academic language is limited, restrictions are placed on a student's ability to comprehend, analyze complex texts, develop content knowledge across subject areas, and write and express themselves effectively **(**Francis et al., 2006). Due to the **critical importance of academic language for learning and expressive communication**, academic language must be included in an integrated model of vocabulary instruction. Common Core CCR Anchor Standard 5 for Language targets an integrated model of vocabulary instruction: *Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.*

Explicitly Teach Sentence Formation and Sentence-Combining

Knowing how to form or build a sentence is *necessary* discourse knowledge for writing. Without the knowledge of how to write sentences in a conventionally correct and effective manner, a writer cannot translate thoughts into text. In addition, poorly constructed and grammatically incorrect sentences make text more difficult to read (Saddler & Graham, 2005). **Sentence formation is a complex skill that requires significant guidance**: students must think about what words to use, what the correct syntax might be, how to connect a sentence to the sentence before and after, and whether or not the sentence expresses clear meaning. Sentence building skills are particularly important for ELs whose native language likely uses a different syntax than English. Explicitly identifying syntax differences greatly helps ELs understand necessary focus areas.

Sentence-combining skills help students produce more syntactically mature sentences. Syntactical maturity is the ability to vary complex and compound sentences within a composition. Although grammar instruction is important, traditional grammar instruction is unlikely to improve the overall quality of students' writing (Andrews, et al., 2006; Graham & Perin, 2007; Saddler & Graham, 2005). Alternative methods of developing grammar, such as **sentence-combining**, may be more effective. Students who struggle with writing, however, do benefit from more explicit forms of instruction to teach grammar skills (Rogers & Graham, 2008).

Sentence-combining improves the quality of writing for students at the elementary through college-level (Saddler, 2007). When students are explicitly taught how to use sentence-combining skills, students develop knowledge about how sentences are constructed. During the process of sentence-level syntactic manipulation

- The writer can see the reader's perspective more clearly
- Choppy or run-on sentences are re-built
- Punctuation, and punctuation's role in sentence organization, can be more carefully observed
- Revising skills are developed.

When students are taught sentence-combining, writing confidence, punctuation knowledge, and revision skills improve because **students develop an organized knowledge (i.e., discourse knowledge) of syntactic structures** as well as conventionally appropriate, alternative structures (Saddler & Preschern, 2007):

Consider the following guidelines when teaching sentence-combining skills:

- ✓ Organize lessons to include teacher modeling, supported practice, and independent practice.

- ✓ Teach students techniques to use when sentence-combining.

- ✓ Make sentence-combining activities meaningful.

- ✓ Construct "low risk" sentence-combining activities. Students should be encouraged to experiment in sentence-combining activities. If a combined sentence is grammatically acceptable, there should not be a "right" or "wrong" answer. Rather encourage students to explore and discuss what makes sentences more or less effective for different purposes.

- ✓ Build activities and instruction that will help students transfer sentence-combining to their own writing. Sentence-combining activities must not be stand-alone "skill building" exercises. Rather, use instruction to emphasize a transfer to students' actual writing. Use student-writing examples for sentence-combining and include sentence-combining as a key element on edit and revise rubrics.

Although there is *not* an established or "correct" order for introducing and teaching sentence-combining skills, a suggested sequence is presented below:

Possible Sequence of Sentence-Combining Skills	
Skill:	**Examples:**

Inserting adjectives and adverbs	The man ate the pizza.
	 The man was <u>hungry</u>
	     The hungry man ate the pizza.
	 The man ate the pizza.
	 He ate <u>hungrily</u>.
	     The man ate the pizza hungrily.

Producing compound subjects and objects	Michael wanted to read.
	 <u>Jennifer</u> wanted to read.
	     Michael and Jennifer wanted to read.
	 Mario wanted pizza.
	 Mario wanted <u>soda</u>.
	     Mario wanted pizza and soda.

Producing compound sentences with coordinating conjunctions	Jasmine wanted to play outside. Emma wanted to play inside. (but) Jasmine wanted to play outside, but Emma wanted to play inside.
Producing possessive nouns	I like the puppy. It is <u>Andrew's</u>. I like Andrew's puppy.
Producing sentences with adverbial clauses, using subordinating conjunctions (e.g. because, after, until, when)	We went to school. We wanted to learn writing. (because) We went to school because we wanted to learn writing.
Producing sentences with relative clauses	The girl will be first in line. The girl <u>is the quietest</u>. *(who)* The girl who is the quietest will be first in line.

*Saddler (2005).

Initially, more contrived practice exercises are needed to help students build a variety of quality sentences. As students become comfortable, they can transfer sentence-combining to their own writing during the revision process. Sentence building and sentence-combining can also be contexts to develop capitalization and punctuation skills.

Organizing Principle 4: Use Techniques to Motivate and Engage Students in the Development of Writing Skills

> Interviewers often ask famous writers why they write. Many, like John Ashbery, answer ". . .because I want to."
>
> -From A. Lamott (1994). *Bird by bird: Some instructions on writing and life.* New York: Anchor Books.

Research suggests that **motivation** is an important component in writing development (Troia, Shankland, & Wolbers, 2010). At the beginning of elementary school, most students really want to write. Often young students will even self-initiate writing and create their own writing projects. It is not uncommon to see handwritten notes and letters, labeled and "narrated" artwork, and self-made books. Unfortunately as the years pass, however, student motivation to write often decreases or disappears. The **declining interest in writing** may be due to a lack of success in the writing process and the corresponding development of a self-defeating view about personal writing capabilities, and/or participation in writing activities that seem meaningless and unrelated to student lives and everyday realities.

Provide Supportive Opportunities

Create opportunities that enhance student self-efficacy, provide authentic writing experiences, and motivate students to become successful writers with a classroom environment that is supportive, pleasant, and enthusiastic about writing.

Create Opportunities that Enhance Writing Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's view of his or her capability to perform specific tasks. To help illustrate the role of self-efficacy in the writing process, look at the items from a *Writing Self-Efficacy Survey* in the box below. When reviewing the items, consider how low self-efficacy would affect student writing.

Writing Self-Efficacy Scale				
(1) When writing a paper, it is easy for me to get ideas.				
1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
(2) When writing a paper, it is hard for me to organize my ideas.				
1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
(3) When my class is asked to write a report, mine is one of the best.				
1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
(4) When writing a paper, it is easy for me to get started.				
1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Unsure	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree

| Writing Self-Efficacy Scale |

Writing Self-Efficacy Scale

(5) When writing a paper, I find it easy to make all of the changes I need to make.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(6) When writing a paper, it is easy for me to write my ideas into good sentences.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(7) When my class is asked to write a story, mine is one of the best.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(8) When writing a paper, it is hard for me to keep the paper going.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(9) When my class is asked to write a book report, mine is one of the best.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(10) When writing a paper, it is hard for me to correct my mistakes.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

*From Graham, S., Schwartz, S., & MacArthur, C. (1993). Learning disabled and normally achieving students' knowledge of writing and the composing process, attitude toward writing and self-efficacy. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 26,* 237-249.

Research indicates that **self-efficacy**, or a student's opinion of their writing and themselves as writers, **directly affects the amount of effort a student will expend when writing *and* the quality of their writing performance** (Pajares & Valiante, 2006). Low self-efficacy can also be difficult to change once it becomes an entrenched pattern of interacting and thinking. Fortunately, there are research-based strategies that can be implemented to help students change negative opinions they have of themselves as writers. **The following recommendations** can be integrated within writing instruction to enhance students' overall self-efficacy and **can apply to *all* students** whether or not their self-efficacy about writing is low (Troia, Shankland, & Wolbers, in press):

- ✓ Ensure all students, particularly struggling writers and ELs, have opportunities to perform challenging tasks successfully through sufficient scaffolding.

- ✓ Model coping tactics to show students how to respond when encountering both difficulties and successes (Self-Regulated Strategy Development, as discussed earlier, incorporates coping behaviors in the instructional components).

✓ Give truthful, realistic, and specific feedback regarding performance.

✓ Emphasize that competence is alterable through hard work and effort.

✓ Reinforce effort when students are first mastering a task, but recognize that the continued need to reinforce effort (as opposed to focusing primarily on reinforcing the quality of the content) may be an indication the student's skills are not progressing adequately. Poor writing growth may trigger continued problems with low self-efficacy, despite the best intentions of teachers to praise effort. To address self efficacy in the long term, it is essential to find ways to help students improve as writers.

Develop Authentic Writing Experiences and Assignments

Motivational issues also arise when students perceive writing tasks as simply "another task to complete." When a writing assignment lacks any connection to student personal experience and interests, motivation is often lost. **Attitudes toward writing tasks do matter; they influence involvement and achievement** (Graham, Berninger, & Fan, 2007). To foster student motivation, create classroom conditions and authentic writing tasks that make writing meaningful and interesting.

Help students see writing as a meaningful activity that has value or relevance. Examples might include writing a letter to the police chief about a stop sign that should be installed in front of the school, or writing a persuasive essay attempting to convince others to vote for a ballot referendum. Writing tasks required in the K-12 CCSS involve writing about content in subject-area classes. Examples include asking students to write their impressions about a documentary viewed in social studies class on Martin Luther King or to write a report on the results of a scientific experiment. The following examples illustrate how writing tasks can become more meaningful.

Writing Tasks	*Meaningful* Writing Tasks
Learning persuasive writing to master the 5-paragraph easy format.	Learning persuasive writing to argue a point of view in a social studies debate.
Writing a story that only the teacher reads and grades.	Reading your own story to your peers in class or publishing it in a class magazine for parents.

*MacArthur (2006)

Make writing interesting. Many teachers think that simply giving students *interesting topics* or letting them pick their own topics motivates students to write. Just because a student finds a topic interesting, he or she may not want to write about it. The issue is *making* writing interesting. Generating interesting topics is a good place to begin, but finding ways to **help students see the writing activity as *worthwhile*** is what makes the difference.

Stress the communicative realm of writing. Writing is much more than a solitary activity in which a student demonstrates what he or she has learned and then is evaluated by the teacher. Instead, **writing can be viewed as a social activity** in which what one writes is shared with various audiences for various purposes. Students also take on the roles of *both* readers *and* writers when they share written work and the communicative aspect of writing is stressed. Writing may even include the **collaborative, co-construction of text**, as suggested by Common Core CCR Anchor Writing Standard 6: *Use technology,*

including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others. Planned and careful use of the Internet can also support writing's communicative function and provide authentic audiences and social context. Consult instructional technology specialists for information and support**.** Some communicative writing ideas are listed in the box below to help get instructional brainstorming started:

Communicative Writing Ideas

- Develop collaborative web-based projects (e.g., two or more classrooms study similar topics and share their feelings through writing and visual arts via the Internet) (Leu, Leu et al, 2004).

- Create classroom blogs to support the development of opinion/argument writing.

- Implement Pen Pal writing across classes, grades, with adult mentors, with students from another state or country, etc.

- Compile anthologies with stories, recipes, and/or informational/explanatory writing (e.g., class or school literary magazine).

- Write texts that can be read to students in a younger grade (e.g., middle school students write children's storybooks for a kindergarten class, high school students use informational/explanatory writing to write short science books for elementary grade students about animals (e.g., mammals, reptiles, insets), or use argument writing to write about historical events from the perspective of notable historical figures for middle school students).

- Group students for collaborative-writing projects by student interest or project topic.

- Interview published authors and other adults who use writing in their professional work.

- Celebrate student writing with a school Writing Festival or Fair. Model the festival around "real" writing conferences that career writers attend and writing festivals such as Washington D.C.'s annual National Book Festival on the mall. Include displays of student work; provide multiple copies of school literacy magazines; have student author readings; schedule writers' roundtables for small groups of students to discuss work on common topics; have "book talks" and "meet the author" lunches, etc. Celebrate writing!

- Other Ideas?!?. . .

Create a Classroom Environment that is Supportive, Pleasant, and Enthusiastic about Writing

Students become enthusiastic about writing when teachers are enthusiastic about writing! **Research shows that students do adopt teachers' attitudes about writing** (Daisey, 2009). Because attitudes about writing are communicated, it's very important that classrooms are supportive and positive about student writing experiences. If writing is demonstrated with hesitation and reluctance during a "live" explicit instruction model, students will likely pay attention to the reluctance rather than the writing (or the writing process) that is demonstrated.

What are your attitudes toward writing? Use the *Attitudes Toward Writing* survey in the box below to reflect on your attitudes toward writing. **Think about *how* your attitudes might influence your writing instruction and the classroom environment that you create for writing.**

Attitudes Toward Writing

(1) I like to write.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(2) I would rather read than write.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(3) I do writing on my own outside of school or work.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(4) I avoid writing whenever I can.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(5) I would rather write than do math problems.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

(6) Writing is a waste of time.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree

*From Graham, S., Schwartz, S., & MacArthur, C. (1993). Learning disabled and normally achieving students' knowledge of writing and the composing process, attitude toward writing and self-efficacy. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 26,* 237-249.

Enthusiasm often comes from confidence. Therefore, bring confidence to the writing that is demonstrated in the classroom. If there isn't secure confidence in the writing required for demonstration during instruction, no worries! --use the Framework as an opportunity to improve your own personal skills a writer. As Sophy Burnham the American writer has noted, *"Many writers, I suppose, are not 'born writers.' They work."*

Organizing Principle 5: Provide Differentiated Writing Instruction through a Multi-tiered Instructional Model

Use a multi-tiered instructional model for writing, similar to that used for reading instruction.

Tiered Model of Instruction

Multi-tiered instructional models provide differentiated instruction based on student learning needs. Effective differentiated instruction significantly improves outcomes for below- and above-grade level writers. **"Tier 1"** instruction is provided to all students within the grade or classroom. Students who are not progressing as expected and/or are not meeting grade-level writing goals receive individualized instruction, referred to as "Tier 2" or "Tier 3." In most multi-tiered instructional models, students receiving **Tier 2** instruction are at moderate risk for long-term difficulties, while students receiving **Tier 3** instruction are at higher risk and require the most intensive instruction. Students writing significantly above grade level also need specialized instruction. (For more information about multi-tier instruction, see the Oregon K-12 Literacy Framework: Reading, [Instruction,](#) pp. I-37-41.)

More intensive instruction should be provided to those not responding adequately to Tier 1 instruction. *Research cannot currently distinguish between Tier 2 and Tier 3 writing interventions* (Olinghouse, Graham, & Harris, 2010). As a result, writing strategies for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students are combined within K-12 Writing.

Provide Tier 1 Writing Instruction

Tier 1 instructional practices *can* improve students' writing skills (National Commission on Writing, 2006). Despite the effectiveness of Tier 1 instruction, not *all* evidence-based practices work for *all* students in every situation. Therefore, always identify: What are student learning needs? What is the purpose of instruction?

Unfortunately, there is a current lack of research-based, commercially-available writing programs available for Tier 1 instruction. Until more quality programs are available, practitioners must do their best to design their own instruction. Professional writers and writing teachers can be consulted to provide experience-based advice – but a note of caution: experience-based advice does not qualify as empirical evidence. As research examining the effectiveness of specific intervention techniques emerges, and more research-based, commercially available programs are developed, the Framework should be used to guide how Tier 1 writing instruction is designed and delivered. The Framework is based on the available scientific studies that examine the effectiveness of specific intervention techniques. These studies provide evidence on whether specific instructional procedures result in the desired effect, whether the observed effects are representative, and how much confidence researchers can place on the results. These **evidence-based practices are** *summarized*, *defined* and *described* as **the Organizing Principles** within this chapter.

Provide Tier 2-3 Writing Instruction

Tier 2 and 3 students typically perform below their peers in writing achievement, do not respond adequately to Tier 1 instruction, and make slower-than-expected progress. They may include students with writing disabilities and students for whom English is a second language. **There is considerable overlap between Tier 1 and Tier 2-3 recommendations.** Tier 2-3 instruction follows the Tier 1 approach but provides more intensive instruction through: (a) an increased level of explicit instruction; (2) small-group instruction; and (3) increased duration of instructional time (Olinghouse, Graham, & Harris, 2010). These teaching recommendations are beneficial for struggling writers, including students with learning disabilities and English Learners (Graves & Rueda, 2009).

Generally, more explicit instruction calls for **increased** "**instructional density**." This may involve **more** explicit teacher language, **more** modeling, and **more** opportunities to practice critical writing skills. The "Teaching the Writing Process for Genre-Specific Text Types" example presented in Principle 3 – "Use Explicit Instruction," illustrates how modeling and independent practice opportunities can be layered as needed within the stages of the writing process.

Other critical components of **Tier 2-3** explicit instruction include **increased** teacher feedback**, re-teaching** of critical concepts and skills**,** and **increased** scaffolding until students can perform writing tasks more independently. **Scaffolding** refers to the idea that specialized instructional supports need to be in place when students are first introduced to a new subject to best facilitate student learning. For example, teachers may continue to use think sheets for the planning stage of the writing process much longer than typical Tier 1 students. The example presented earlier of the "highly prompted" and "prompted" story note sheets also illustrates how materials can be scaffolded at different levels of support (See Principle 2 – Recommendations on Using Graphic Organizers).

Small group instruction also facilitates increased instructional density. With small group instruction, students with similar writing needs are grouped for instruction, lowering the student-teacher ratio and allowing more specific teacher modeling of target skills, increased opportunities to receive individualized feedback, and an environment in which students feel comfortable practicing skills and strategies. Small group instruction can take place within or outside the time block set aside for writing instruction. For students who have not met grade-level writing goals, the amount of instructional time provided beyond the writing block should be based on individualized needs.

Improvement for those who significantly struggle with writing will most likely be slow. While these students receive targeted writing instruction, however, they should also participate in classroom activities within all content areas. Accommodations and modifications can also be made to support struggling writers. **Accommodations** are changes to the *way* a student is expected to learn or how he or she is assessed. Students with accommodations still have the same goals as everyone else in the classroom; they may simply need changes to the manner in which these goals are met. **Modifications** are changes to *what* a student is expected to learn. A team working with the student, such as an IEP team, generally determines modifications. These decisions will need to be made on an individual student basis. Below are selected examples of accommodations and modifications that teachers and school teams may consider for struggling writers:

Accommodations in the Learning Environment

- Increase instructional time for writing.

- Provide quiet and comfortable spaces for students to work.

- Consult with an occupational therapist to identify specialized adaptations (e.g., chair and desk height).

Accommodations in Instructional Materials

- Simplify language of writing prompts.

- Transition from simple to more elaborate graphic organizers and procedural checklists.

- Post strategies, graphic organizers, and checklists in classroom and give students personal copies.

- Develop individualized spelling lists.

- Have students keep a personal dictionary of "demon" words and frequently used spelling vocabulary.

- Provide students with pencil grips.

- For young students, provide personal copies of alphabet strips.

Accommodations in Teaching Strategies

- Devote more instructional time to writing mechanics.

- Provide physical assistance during handwriting practice.

- Expect and support mastery learning of skills and strategies (e.g., memorization of strategy steps).

- Assign homework designed to reinforce writing instruction.

- Help students develop self-instructions (e.g., "I can handle this if I go slow.") and self-questions (e.g., "Am I following my plan?") that focus on positive attributions for success and task progress.

- Have students keep a strategy notebook which they can consult at any time.

Modifications to Task Demands in the Classroom

- Increase amount of time allotted for completing written assignments.

- Decrease the length and/or complexity of written assignments.

- Provide sentence frames.

- Have students complete text frames (i.e., partially finished texts).

- Reduce or eliminate copying demands (e.g., teach students abbreviations for note taking).

- Arrange for students to dictate written work to a scribe.

- If students have adequately developed keyboarding skills, arrange for them to write papers with a word processor.

- Permit students to use voice recognition technology to facilitate text transcription.

- Permit students to use integrated spell checker and/or word prediction software to facilitate correct spelling.

- Selectively weight grading for content, organization, style, and conventions.

- Grade assignments based on the amount of improvement rather than absolute performance.

- Assign letter grades for body of work collected over time (i.e., portfolio assessment) rather than for each paper.

- Provide feedback on content, organization, style, and conventions for some rather than all assignments (which may reduce students' anxiety about writing).

- Provide feedback on targeted aspects of writing rather than all aspects to avoid overwhelming students.

Modifications to Learning Tasks

- Permit students to dramatize or orally present a written assignment, either in lieu of writing or in preparation for writing.

- Assign students suitable roles (e.g., brainstorm manager) for the creation of a group-generated paper.

Ensure English Learners Receive Instructional Support

Many English Learners (ELs) will require specialized and scaffolded support to become proficient writers because of their developing English vocabulary**.** The specific needs of ELs vary due to diverse backgrounds and cultures, language proficiency, and prior educational experiences. Many students have exceptional cognitive burdens and feel overwhelmed when having to learn new writing techniques while unfamiliar with academic language and the text structures within various genres. In these cases, **cognitive strategy instruction** – teaching strategy steps, cognitive modeling, guided instruction, and self-regulation (such as the SRSD model presented earlier) – will be useful (Graves & Rueda, 2009). Key vocabulary words and sentence frames can also be provided as supports.

Motivation should be also be specifically addressed with ELs. Students may not see writing instruction and required tasks as relevant to their out-of-school lives. Making connections between academic exercises and out-of-school experiences and interests addresses these concerns. Students are more likely to be motivated when asked to complete ambitious **tasks for authentic purposes**. Creating a sense of student belonging is also important. The classroom environment should make *all* students feel a sense of belonging, support, and community.

As a whole, many of the strategies described throughout the Framework for struggling writers will be useful for instructing ELs as well. Teachers of ELs will find the concept of scaffolding and the specific strategies described above focusing on Tier 2-3 instruction particularly useful.

Organizing Principle 6: Use Writing as a Tool to Strengthen Reading Comprehension and Enhance Learning across the School Curriculum

Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them.
Vygotsky (1962)

The CCR Anchor Standards for Writing, particularly Standards 7-10, emphasize the use of writing for thinking and learning and specify the need for students to develop the capacity to build knowledge in literature, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects through short, as well as longer, focused research projects and to respond analytically to literacy and informational sources. The National Writing Commission (National Commission on Writing, 2003) also strongly endorses this approach to improve learning. **The rationale for integrating writing into content-area instruction is threefold.**

Integrating Writing across the Curriculum

First, the concept of instructional time as discussed in *Organizing Principle 1*: *Allow Sufficient Time for Writing and Writing Instruction* calls for a **substantial increase in the amount of time spent on writing instruction**. That is not feasible unless students write outside of the language arts classroom. **Second**, research indicates that writing can be used as a tool for improving reading abilities (Graham & Hebert, 2010). In particular, research suggests that **writing about a text enhances reading comprehension** because it helps students make connections between what they read, know, understand, and think (Carr, 2002; Graham & Hebert, 2010). **Third**, **writing promotes thinking and learning across other areas of the curriculum**. If students are to become sophisticated writers, they need opportunities to write across different kinds of texts and subject areas.

Use Writing to Improve Reading and Text Comprehension across Disciplines

The national *Writing to Read* report (Graham & Hebert, 2010) identifies several specific instructional practices on the use of writing to improve reading and comprehension. **When using writing to improve reading and text comprehension, use the following "writing to read" strategies:**

Text Responding. Having students write about a text provides an opportunity to think about the ideas that were read. Writing a response to a text requires the organization of ideas into a coherent whole, encourages reflection, and requires a transformation of the text's ideas into an individual's own voice. In the Common Core State Standards, the first task for students is to find text-based answers within the text itself. **Modeling and demonstration** should occur before students are asked to find text-based answers independently. Once students have completed a deep analysis of the text, providing the text is complex enough to warrant deep analysis, students write about their findings, interpreting the text or providing an analysis of some part of the text. Writing a personal reaction to a text might follow these other prioritized analysis activities.

- ✓ **Summarizing.** Having students summarize a text requires students to extract the most important pieces (i.e., main ideas) of a text and arrange them logically. Research indicates this practice consistently shows a positive impact on reading comprehension. **Modeling and demonstration should occur before students are asked to write a summary.** Teachers must ensure students know how to write a quality summary before they are asked to so independently.

- ✓ **Note-taking.** Having students take written notes about a text **enhances comprehension**, as students are required to determine what is most relevant and reduce important concepts and ideas to phases and/or key words. **Modeling** and demonstration should occur before students are asked to write notes independently. Note-taking is a skill that will differ across disciplines.

Writing Questions and Answering Questions. Although answering questions about a text can be done during a class discussion, writing answers to questions makes answers more memorable because writing provides a second form of rehearsal. The written product can also be reviewed and amended. Students can create written questions about text as well. **Modeling** and demonstration should occur before students are asked to write and answer questions about text.

Use Writing to Enhance Thinking and Learning Throughout the Curriculum

Writing instruction and **"writing to learn" tasks** should be incorporated into content-area instruction *on a* daily basis. Writing in the content areas

- Prompts students to think, reflect, and organize thoughts about the instruction they receive or texts they read

- Helps prepare students for writing in future employment situations and/or post-secondary education

- Helps teachers better identify how well students understand the concepts being taught so that instruction can be adjusted accordingly.

There are many ways to infuse writing across the curriculum. Common Core CCR Anchor Standard for Writing 7 emphasizes the need for students to **conduct both short and sustained research projects** across various subject areas. The research projects are based on **common focus questions** (for table of Common Questions, see Oregon Literacy Plan, "K-12 Teachers: Building Comprehension *in* the Common Core," pp. 61-63) that can be used to prompt writing starting in early elementary school. Other ways to incorporate writing across the curriculum include: journals, logs, responses to written and oral discussion questions, summaries, free writing, note taking, and other writing assignments that align with the purpose of the lesson and focus of student learning.

Some "writing to learn" examples are listed below:

- **Mathematics***:* A teacher poses the following writing prompt on the board after presenting a math problem: "*I believe the answer is _____. I believe this because . . ."*

- **Social Studies:** Students are asked to view a painting that was created during a time period they are studying in history. In a writing assignment, students are asked to use what they know about the historical time period to describe what might be happening in the painting.

- **Science***:* Students are asked to complete a graphic organizer to illustrate events in nature that happen in a particular order. After completing the graphic organizing, students write a paragraph summarizing those events.

A number of resources, as well as some commercial materials, are available to assist content-area teachers with the "writing to learn" recommendation. Several resources are also cited in the Resources section at the conclusion of the chapter.

Overall, the CCSS stress the integration of reading and writing instruction, as well as speaking, listening, and language development, as essential for building a strong, cohesive literacy program. The opportunities for integrating writing in content area instruction are numerous!

Summary

In conclusion, writing instruction requires time; attention to the development of student discourse knowledge, motivation, and comprehension; and differentiated and explicit instruction in general and genre-specific writing strategies.

By employing the *Organizing Principles* discussed in this chapter, fewer students in Oregon will struggle with writing. Instead, Oregon students will

- Write for a substantial, extended **time** *each day* in elementary, middle and high school

- Understand the **writing process**, participate in high-level classroom discussions about writing, receive structured, individual feedback about writing, and collaborate with peers

- Have **discourse knowledge** about writing, including a deep understanding of genre-specific text structure, fluent use of handwriting, keyboarding, and word processing skills, and high levels of proficiency in the linguistic-related skills of spelling, sentence-combining, and vocabulary use

- Like writing and are **motivated to write** with a view of themselves as talented writers

- Participate in a **multi-tiered instructional approach** and receive **differentiated instruction** when needed

- Use writing to **enhance comprehension and learning** across academic disciplines.

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Resources

Resources for Selecting and Teaching Writing Strategies:

- **Books:**

    Graham, Steve, & Harris, Karen R. (2005). *Writing better: Effective strategies for teaching students with learning difficulties.* Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

    Harris, Karen R., Graham, Steve, Mason, Linda H., & Friedlander, Barbara. (2008) *POWERFUL writing strategies for all students.* Baltimore: Brookes Publishing.

- **Websites:**

    The IRIS Center at Vanderbilt University provides information on using writing strategies through resources, case studies, and modeling through online videos.

    http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/index.html

    KU Center for Research on Learning is home to the Strategic Intervention Model. The Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) is a comprehensive approach to teaching adolescents who struggle with becoming good readers, writers, and learners and has over 25 years of research. The model includes strategies for writing competence such as the *Error Monitoring Strategy* and the EDIT strategy. Overview information is available as well as information on training opportunities.

    http://www.kucrl.org/sim/strategies.shtml

    The Access Center for Improving Outcomes for All Students K-8 provides research-based strategies to use in a number of academic areas. *Teaching Writing to Diverse Student Populations* contains a comprehensive overview of writing including the use of writing strategies teachers can use for instructing on planning and revising across different genres.

    http://www.k8accesscenter.org/writing/knowledgebank.asp

    Special Connections – University of Kansas provides strategies to assist teachers in helping students who struggle in a number of areas including instruction. The *Writing* module within the *Instruction* section was developed by Dr. Gary Troia and includes instructional tools related to genre-focused planning strategies, revising strategies, and ideas for integrating writing strategies within content areas.

    http://www.specialconnections.ku.edu/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/specconn/index.php

Resources for Development of Content Area Writing Tasks

- The **Michigan Department of Education** has produced several comprehensive documents on writing across the curriculum including specific writing activities for science, social studies and mathematics. Each document can be downloaded.

  http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-28753_5702---,00.html

- **General Websites for Writing in Mathematics**

  In Class Writing Assignments in the Content Areas

  http://www.mathnstuff.com/papers/inclass.htm

  Writing in Mathematics

  http://mathwire.com/writing/writing1.html

  Using Writing in Mathematics to Deepen Students' Learning

  http://www.mcrel.org/pdf/mathematics

- **General Websites for Writing in Science**

  Writing in Science Classrooms

  http://www.education.com/reference/article/writing-science-classrooms

  The Power of Writing in Science

  http://teachingtoday.glencoe.com/howtoarticles/the-power-of-writing-in-science

- **General Websites for Writing in Social Studies**

  Popular Creative Writing Activities for Social Studies

  http://www.teachervision.fen.com/creative-writing/social-studies/54697.html

  Writing to Learn in Social Studies (Boyer, 2006) is a teacher-friendly article that appeared in *The Social Studies* and discusses useful writing activities to help students learn social studies content.

  http://heldrefpublications.metapress.com/app/home/contribution.asp?referrer=parent&backto=issue,4,8;journal,28,84;linkingpublicationresults,1:119951,1

Story Note Sheet

Setting – where and when the story took place

Main Character (protagonist) – the person or persons whom the problem/conflict revolves around

Character Clues – appearance, actions, dialogue, comments of others, thoughts

Problem/Conflicts

Attempts – how the characters try to solve the problem

Resolution – how the problem gets solved or does not get solved

Story Elements

Setting	Problem	Conclusion
Main Character	Attempts	Theme
Character Clues	Resolution	

I liked 🙂 / didn't like ☹

_____

because_____

_____.

Position

Reason For	Reason For	Reason For
The first reason is. . .	The second reason is. . .	The third reason is. . .
Supporting Facts	Supporting Facts	Supporting Facts
Give examples, details	Give examples, details	Give examples, details

Gist Log

1. Who or what is the paragraph mostly about?

2. What is the most important information about the who or what?

3. Write the gist/main idea in a complete sentence of 10 words or less.

Main Idea Sentence	Detail 1
	Detail 2
	Detail 3

Summary Chart

Main Idea

Main Idea

Main Idea

Summary