Supporting Struggling Students in Disciplinary Writing

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EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES FOR CONTENT AREA WRITING

EBPs for Writing

Essential Component	Associated Practices
1. Writing is an Essential Part of the Curriculum • Time is devoted daily to explicit writing instruction and practice, including free writing. **2. Varied Approaches to the Teaching of Writing** • There are diverse approaches to teaching writing, including process instruction, strategy instruction, and comprehensive instruction.	*1A. Providing Extra Time for Writing: Duration and/or frequency of sustained student writing are increased (e.g., write frequently).* *1B. Free Writing: Permit students to write about their choice of topic without concern for grading (e.g., journaling).* *2A. Process Writing Instruction: An instructional approach with a focus on writing processes that involves: writing for real/authentic/multiple purposes and audiences (e.g., other than teacher); engaging in cycles of planning, translating, and reviewing; and personal responsibility and ownership of writing projects (e.g., student choice and student-directed decision making).* *2B. Comprehensive Writing Instruction: An instructional approach with a focus on writing process plus strategy instruction, skill instruction, and/or text structure instruction.* *2C. Strategy Instruction: An instructional approach in which students are explicitly and systematically taught (through modeling and guided practice with feedback) one or more strategies for planning, drafting, revising, and/or editing text with the goal of independent strategy usage.*

3. Instruction Focused on Process Elements

• Activities and routines are established to help students successfully apply the writing process in an iterative and recursive fashion.

3A. Teaching Prewriting/Planning/Drafting: Teach using activities (e.g., using graphic organizers or brainstorming ideas or strategies) that are designed to help students generate and/or organize ideas prior to writing and/or write a first draft that later will be reworked.

3B. Teaching Revising & Editing: Teach checking routines (e.g., read-aloud to locate and correct errors) or other means by which to correct errors in written work, including usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

4. Instruction Focused on Product Elements

• Activities and routines are established to help students incorporate conventional structural elements and creativity in their compositions.

4A. Paragraph Structure Instruction: Teach students how to organize information into paragraphs.

4B. Text Structure Instruction: Teach students how different types of texts are structured and formed.

4C. Vocabulary Instruction: Teach students genre- and topic-specific vocabulary to use in their compositions.

4D. Creativity/Imagery Instruction: Teach students to use visual images or other means to enhance creativity in writing.

4E. Utilizing Text Models: Students read and analyze examples of one or more texts in order to recognize and emulate the patterns or forms in these examples in their own writing.

5. Utilizing Technology in Writing Instruction

- Computer tools and software are incorporated throughout the writing process to support the production of text.

5A. Utilizing a Word Processor: Students use a word processor as a primary tool for the production (including composition, editing, formatting, and possibly printing) of text.

5B. Utilizing Technology Applications: Students use computers that are packaged with other software or hardware that supports the writer, such as spelling and grammar checkers, software for formatting text, speech synthesis, speech recognition , planning and outlining software, software for prompting students while writing, as well as software that provides feedback on specific aspects of the written text.

6. Effective Assessment & Feedback for Writing

- Concrete feedback regarding student writing is given by other students and the teacher to support writing improvement.
- Factors that influence the reliable and valid assessment of writing are understood.

6A. Utilizing Rubrics: Teach students to apply the criteria embodied by the scale or series of question on the rubric and formulate possible revisions or ideas for revisions.

6B. Feedback: Verbal or written information, including praise, in response to an author's work or a group's efforts at any point in the writing process received from peers and/or adults.

6C. Construct Representation & Scoring in Writing Assessment: Evaluations of writing performance must be based on multiple samples of varied types of writing using consistent scoring methods and multiple raters.

6D. Presentation Effects on Writing Assessment: Handwriting, spelling, and grammar errors have a significant detrimental impact on the evaluation of students' writing quality and/or content

7. Instruction Focused on Writing Skills

• Activities and routines are established to help students develop and apply knowledge about the conventions of written English and specific writing skills, including spelling, handwriting, keyboarding, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.

7A. Transcription Skills Instruction: Teach students spelling, handwriting, and keyboarding (typing) skills to improve quality of writing.

7B. Grammar/Usage Instruction: Teach students correct application of capitalization, punctuation, and grammatical knowledge in the context of composing text.

7C. Sentence-Combining Instruction: Teach students to construct more complex and sophisticated sentences through exercises in which two or more basic kernel sentences are combined into a single sentence.

7D. Decreasing Spelling Errors: The use of varied means to help students identify and correct spelling errors in their written work and understand that misspelled words influence the readers' judgments about the message and the person who wrote it.

7E. Decreasing Grammar/Usage Errors: The use of varied means to help students identify and correct grammar and usage errors in their written work and understand that grammar and usage errors influence the readers' judgments about the message and the person who wrote it.

8. Learning through Writing

• Instruction that aims to help students use textual and other sources of information as content for writing and to use writing as a means of deepening content and literary knowledge.

8A. Teach students to take notes on texts, possibly using structured formats (e.g., a flowchart, outline, or concept map) to support note taking.

8B. Summarization Instruction: Teach students how to summarize text through explicit and systematic instruction that focuses on either strategies for summarizing text or activities designed to improve students' text summarization skills.

8C. Inquiry Instruction: Teach students to develop content for writing by analyzing data derived from investigations/ experimentation, textual/source analysis, or already provided information.

8D. Write in Response to Text: Teach students to read and respond to texts through brief (e.g., questions and answers) and more extended responses (e.g., reactions, interpretations).

8E. Writing to Learn: Writing is used as a mechanism for learning content area or topical information using active, personal, and constructive processes that are refined by feedback.

9. Promoting Independent & Reflective Writers
• Goal setting, performance monitoring, and self-evaluation are key behaviors of accomplished writers.

9A. Self-Regulation & Metacognitive Reflection: Teach students to regulate the quality and productivity of their writing or their content learning through monitoring, reflection, and evaluation of behaviors and performance through tracking (e.g., graphing).

9B. Setting Product Goals: Teachers or students set observable, specific, and individual goals for what students are to accomplish in their writing (e.g., how much students should write).

10. Promoting a Supportive Writing Environment
• Students feel comfortable with writing independently and cooperatively and are encouraged to take risks because they have ample support from enthusiastic teachers.
• Teachers assign motivating writing tasks and make adaptations for individual needs.

10A. Peer Collaboration: Students cooperatively work with their peers to plan, draft, revise, and/or edit their compositions.

10B. Conferencing: Discussion with teacher (or peer) about the writer's goals, thoughts, and behaviors, the writing process, the writing task, or the written product to promote growth as a writer.

10C. Teacher Modeling: Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for writing and regularly display the writing skills, strategies, and processes they wish students to emulate.

10D. Authentic & Relevant Writing Tasks: Writing activities are personally relevant for students and undertaken for authentic purposes and audiences.

10E. Motivation: Teachers reinforce positive student attitudes and beliefs toward writing, partly by encouraging a sense of ownership and pride in one's writing through sharing, public displays, and publishing opportunities.

10F. Adaptations: Teachers adapt the environment, tasks and materials, instruction, and evaluation to accommodate individual writer's needs.

Print Resources

- Harris, K. R., Graham, S., Mason, L. H., & Friedlander, B. (2008). *Powerful writing strategies for all students*. Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

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- Duke, N. K., Caughlan, S., Juzwik, M. M., & Martin, N. M. (2012). *Reading and writing genre with purpose in K-8 classrooms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Coker, D. L., & Ritchey, K. D. (2015). *Teaching beginning writers*. New York: Guilford.

- Graham, S., MacArthur, C. A., & Fitzgerald, J. (Eds.). (2013). *Best practices in writing instruction* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford.

- Troia, G. A., Shankland, R. K., & Heintz, A. (Eds.). (2010). *Putting writing research into practice: Applications for teacher professional development*. New York: Guilford.

- Saddler, B. (2012). *Teacher's guide to effective sentence writing*. New York: Guilford.

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