

# Supporting Implementation of Evidence-Based Strategies in Writing



## Research to Practice Spotlight Series: Session 5 February 2025

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Lauren Artzi, PhD & Kathleen Pfannenstiel, PhD (NCSI)



**Thank you for joining us!**

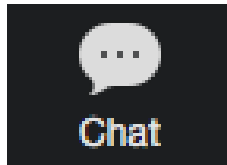
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While we wait to start, feel free to share in the chat what brings you to this event and any questions you may have.

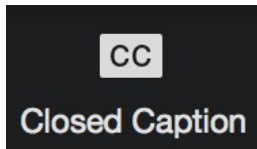
# Zoom Housekeeping



Microphones and videos are off for this event.



Look for the flashing orange alert, which will take you to the chat box when it is active.



Closed captions are available.



This webinar is being recorded.

# Agenda

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- Welcome and overview
- Review of study results
- Examine six effective writing practices and resources
- Discuss implications for practice, professional development, teacher preparation, and policy
- Closing and additional resources



## Introduction to NCSI

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The National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) supports states to transform systems to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Today's webinar relates to one of our three priority areas: Effective Instruction.



## Overview and Purpose of NCSI's Research to Practice Spotlight Series

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- Unpack key evidence-based practices (EBPs) to promote learning for students with disabilities and others struggling to learn reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Share considerations for SEAs and local education agencies (LEAs) to support educators with implementation.

# Setting the Stage: How SEAs Can Support Local Implementation

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- Build SEA capacity about EBPs, including how to support local implementation.
- Identify and disseminate writing EBPs.
- Offer guidance and professional learning on how to implement the writing EBPs within a variety of educational settings (e.g., core classroom, intervention).

# Guiding Questions

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- What questions do you have about the recommendations on how SEAs can support local implementation?
- Do you have relevant experiences to share?





# Meet Your Presenters




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A woman with short dark hair and glasses is reading a book in a library. She is wearing a dark sleeveless top and a backpack. The background shows tall bookshelves filled with books. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent red overlay. At the top of the image, there is a horizontal bar with several colored segments: orange, white, yellow, red, light blue, and green.

# **Supporting Implementation of Evidence-Based Strategies in Writing Instruction**

# Funding Acknowledgment

The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant #R305A200363 to Texas State University. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

➤ ***Acknowledgment to Co-PI Dr. Steve Graham***

# Session Objectives

- Describe how we know “what works” by engaging in systematic reviews of research
- Examine **six** effective writing practices and corresponding resources for using the practices to support teachers.
- Discuss implications for classroom practice, professional development, teacher preparation, and education policy.

# Purpose: Birds Eye View of Writing Instruction



Meta-analysis on:

- All writing interventions
- All writing outcomes
- In Grades K to 5

*Further exploration of:*

- *For whom*
- *Under what conditions*

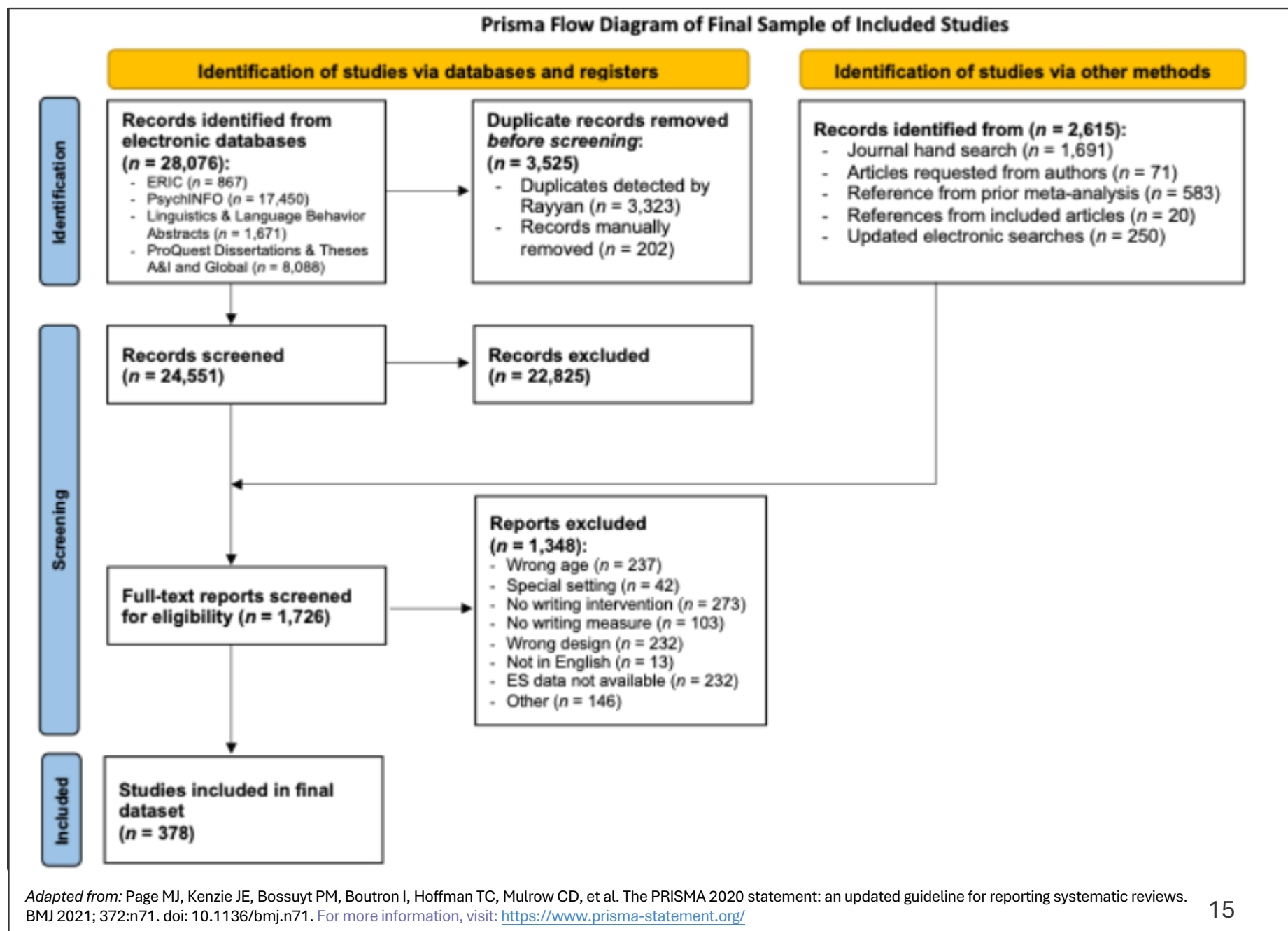
# Engagement Activity



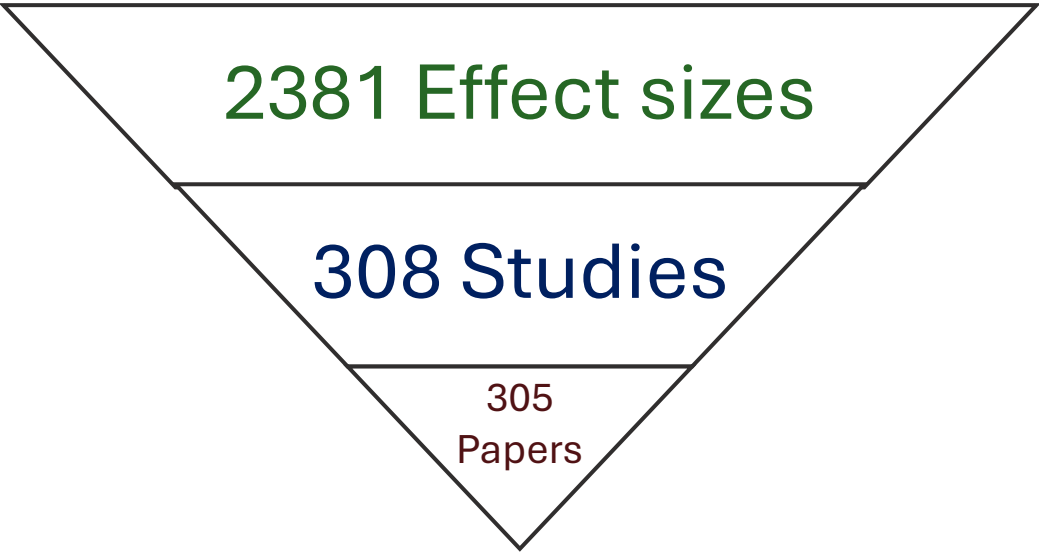
- **Pick a district/school/teacher/student whom you support** to keep in mind today. Make a few notes about their needs.
- During the presentation, identify **one** idea, concept, or strategy that you will use to address their needs.
- After the presentation, identify one idea, concept, or strategy that you would like to **learn more about**. Use the resources provided to develop a plan for putting the ideas into action.



# Finding Studies



# Inclusion Criteria



Components	Description
Population	Sample of students in <b>Grades K to 5</b> (ages 5 to 11)
Intervention	<b>Writing Intervention</b> More than 50% of instructional time devoted to teaching writing.
Comparison	<b>Control Conditions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Business as usual (BAU) or typical practice</li><li>- Designated control with an alternative writing activity</li><li>- Comparison to less than 50% writing</li></ul>
Outcomes	<b>At least one writing measure.</b>
Setting	<b>Typical school setting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- General education class or pull-out class</li><li>- Summer school program</li><li>- Private, Parochial, &amp; Charter schools</li></ul>

# Descriptive Snapshot

Examples of countries where studies were conducted:

- US
- Canada
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Spain
- Taiwan
- UK

Characteristic	Number of Studies	% of Sample
<b>Publication type</b>		
Peer-reviewed	176	57%
Other	132	43%
<b>Design</b>		
Randomized Control Trial	114	37%
Randomized cluster design	81	26%
Quasi-Experimental	113	37%
<b>Country</b>		
United States	218	71%
Other	90	29%
	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<b>Year</b>	1931	2023

# Effect Size Interpretation

- A **positive effect size** ( $ES_g$ ) means that the **writing intervention** had a higher performance than the control condition.
- For a **negative  $ES_g$** , the **control condition** had a more positive effect.
- A **statistically significant  $ES_g$**  suggests that the overall pattern of results across studies is consistent enough that the result is unlikely due to random chance.

Effect Size ( $ES_g$ ) Estimate	Interpretation of Effect
<0.40	Small
0.40 to 0.79	Moderate
>0.80	Large



# Evidence Based Recommendations

- What are the Big 6 recommendations for helping students to become better writers?
- How should educators utilize their time when teaching writing?



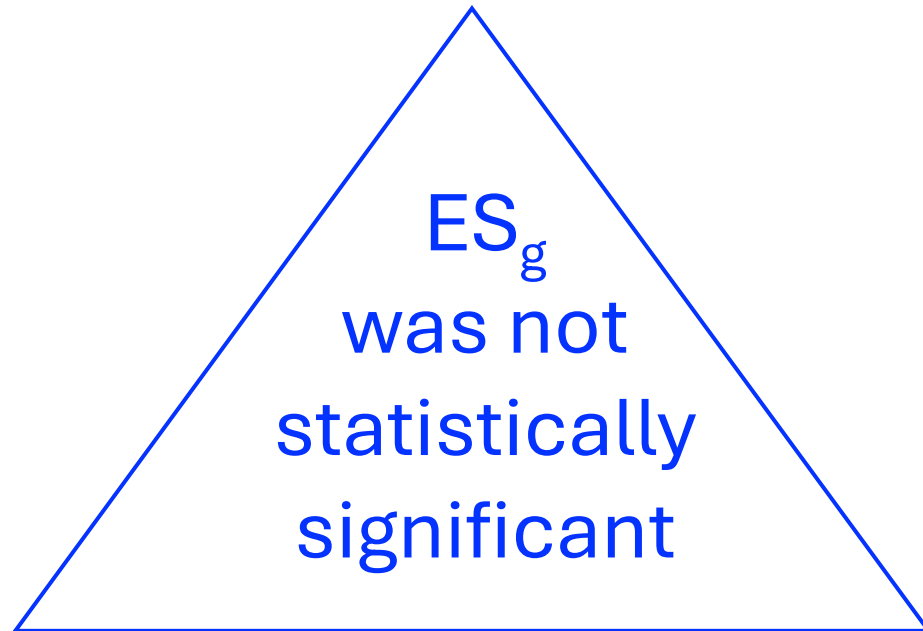
# Recommendations for Teaching Writing

1. Write, *but simply providing more time for writing is **not** enough.*
2. Teach writing strategies.
3. Support students as they write.
4. Teach foundational writing skills.
5. Write across the curriculum (social studies, science).
6. Connect writing and reading instruction.



# Recommendations for Teaching Writing

- **Write, *but more time for writing is not enough.***



# #1: Write, *but time for writing is not enough*

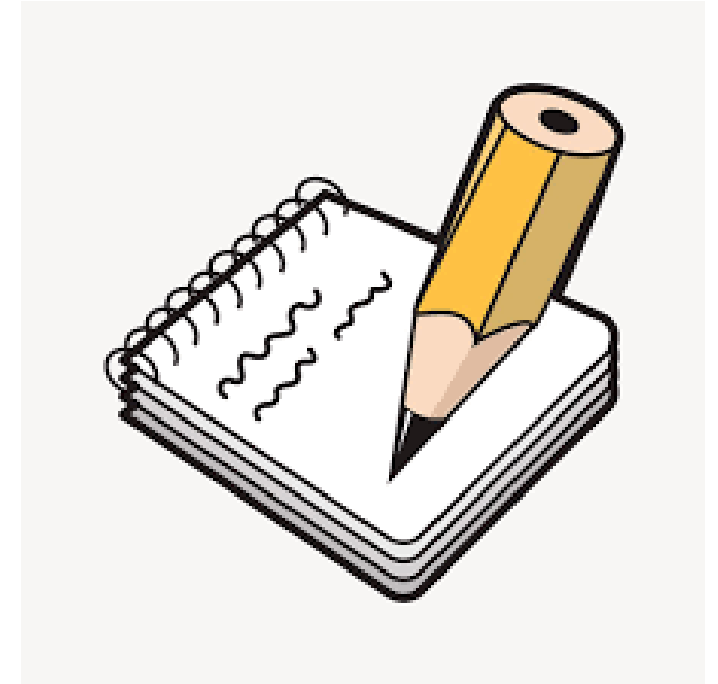
- What does time for writing without instructional support look like?
- What can we do instead?



# #1: Write, *but time for writing is not enough*

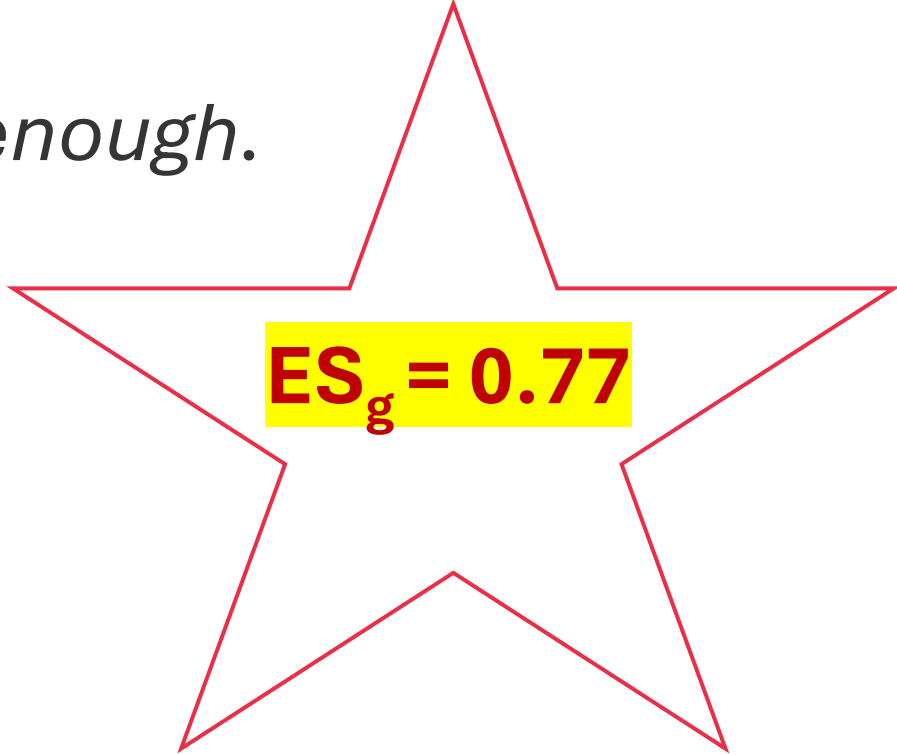
*However,*

- Time to write **paired with instructional strategies** IS effective  
*(stay tuned...see Recommendations #2 and #3).*
- While writing in and of itself did not advance writing proficiency, **writing is still essential to learning.**



# Recommendations for Teaching Writing

1. Write, *but more time for writing is not enough.*
2. **Teach writing strategies.**


$$ES_g = 0.77$$

## #2: Teach writing strategies

- Mental and physical processes for planning, drafting, monitoring, evaluating, revising, and editing.
- Writing strategies guide and coordinate mental and physical operations.
- Strategies enhance students' writing by providing templates for conceptualizing, generating, and reconceptualizing text.
- *In sum, strategies **provide a plan of action!***

# #2: Teach writing strategies

## Strategy example:

### TIDE for Informational Writing

- **T**opic
- **I**mportant ideas (3)
- **D**etailed explanation (3)
- **E**nding

TIDE	
Topic	
<div></div>	
Important Ideas	
Detailed Explanations	
Important idea	<div></div>
Detailed explanation	<div></div>
Important idea	<div></div>
Detailed explanation	<div></div>
Important idea	<div></div>
Detailed explanation	<div></div>
Ending	
<div></div>	
Examine my parts (Are they all there?)	
YES!	No
Writing to Learn™ Course Materials	
SRSD Online 2016-23	



# #2: Teach writing strategies

## Strategy Resource

### Teaching in the Middle

<https://www.teachinginthemiddlepd.com/resources.html>

- Videos of explicit instruction for introducing expository planning guides, feedback for revision, and writing analysis.
- Free materials included

# #2: Teach writing strategies

## Strategy example

Self-Statements used to promote self-efficacy and self-regulation.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Turning the TIDE

**My Self-Statements**

Things to say to myself to get started:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Things to say to myself while I write:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Things to say to myself when writing is hard:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Things to say to myself after I write:

\_\_\_\_\_

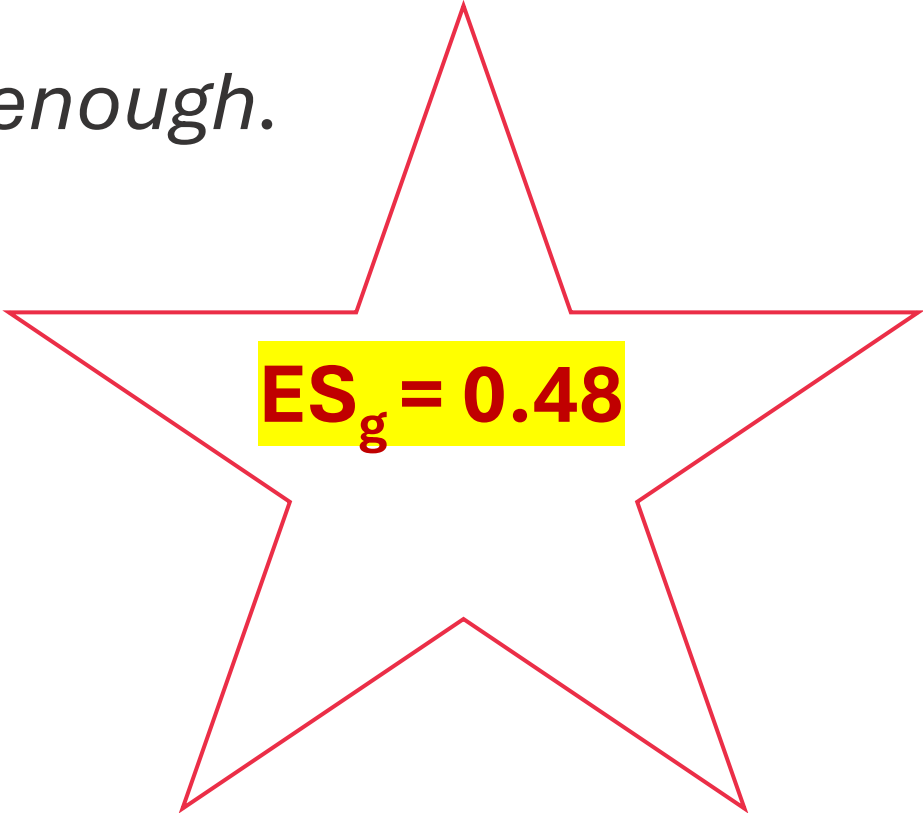
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Recommendations for Teaching Writing

1. Write, *but more time for writing is not enough.*
2. Teach writing strategies.
3. **Support students as they write.**



**$ES_g = 0.48$**

## #3: Support Students

- Systematic and intentional support for students **before**, **during**, and **after** writing can boost student proficiency.
- Use of effective **feedback** is one mechanism for improving writing proficiency.
- What does effective feedback really look like?

# #3: Support Students

## Principles for Effective Feedback

The Be<sub>s</sub>



# #3: Support Students

## Be effective

Feedback is effective when it is:

- Immediate
- Specific
- Constructive





# #3: Support Students

## Be Positive

- Reinforce positive aspects of students' writing.
- Effective praise is specific
  - *“I like how your first sentence clearly stated the topic and gave a preview of what the paragraph is about!”*

# #3: Support Students

## Be balanced

Make conscious decisions on how much emphasis is placed on substance and on form.



# #3: Support Students

## Don't Overwhelm the Writer

Too much feedback can inhibit a writer, make them apathetic to feedback, and convince them that they are struggling.



## Guiding Questions (mid-discussion)

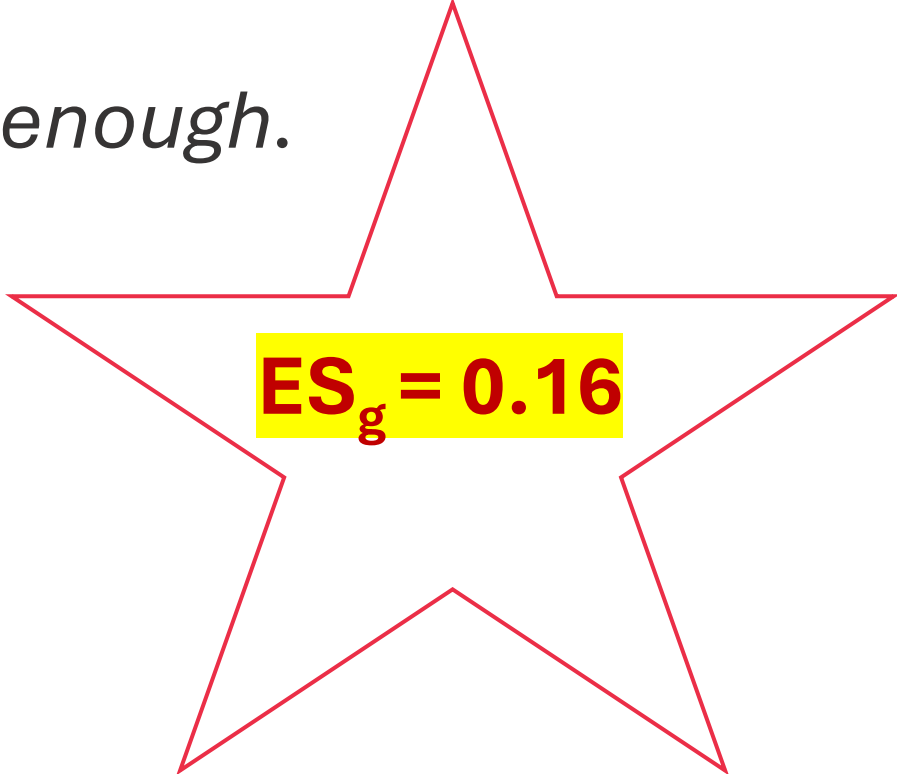
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- What questions do you have about the recommendations on how SEAs can support local implementation?
- Do you have relevant experiences to share?



# Recommendations for Teaching Writing

1. Write, *but more time for writing is not enough.*
2. Teach writing strategies.
3. Support students as they write.
4. **Teach foundational writing skills.**



**ES<sub>g</sub> = 0.16**

# #4: Teach foundational writing skills

## Sentence Writing & Grammar

- Foundational skills are important throughout the elementary grades (**including Grades 4-5**).
- These skills, such as sentence writing instruction, support clear communication and help us to convey our ideas.

# #4: Teach foundational writing skills

## Sentence Combining Example

The brother was happy.

The sister was happy.

(and)



**Combined:** *The brother and the sister were happy.*

## #4: Teach foundational writing skills

### Sentence Combining Example *(Tip: Use Curriculum-aligned examples)*

Producing sentences with adverbial clauses, using connecting words such as: because, after, until, and when.

- People in the 1800s built railroads.
- People wanted to travel faster and cheaper (because).

**Combined:** *People in the 1800s built railroads because they wanted to travel faster and cheaper.*



# #4: Teach foundational writing skills

## How To Teach Sentence Combining

1. Show how to do it and establish its importance **(TEACH – I do)**.
2. Provide assistance until students apply the skill correctly and independently **(GUIDED PRACTICE – We do)**.
3. Ask students to apply the skill when they write **(APPLY – You do)**.

***Doing this once is not enough!***

## #4: Teach foundational writing skills



## Sentence Combining Resource

***Resource from Reading Rockets:***

<https://www.readingrockets.org/classroom/classroom-strategies/sentence-combining>

# #4: Teach foundational writing skills

## *Teaching Grammar Resources*

Debra Myhill and colleagues

<https://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/centres/languageandliteracy/grammar-teacher-resources/>

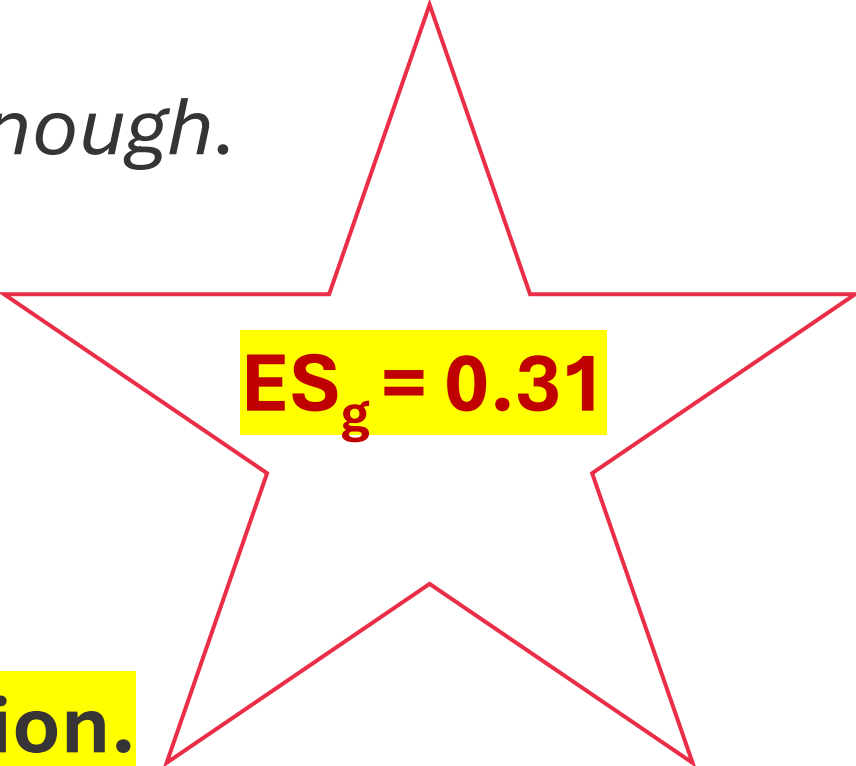
## *Guidance from Reading Rockets*

<https://www.readingrockets.org/resources/expert-qa/how-can-we-teach-grammar-more-effectively>



# Recommendations for Teaching Writing

1. Write, *but more time for writing is not enough.*
2. Teach writing strategies.
3. Support students as they write.
4. Teach foundational writing skills.
5. **Connect writing and reading instruction.**



**$ES_g = 0.31$**

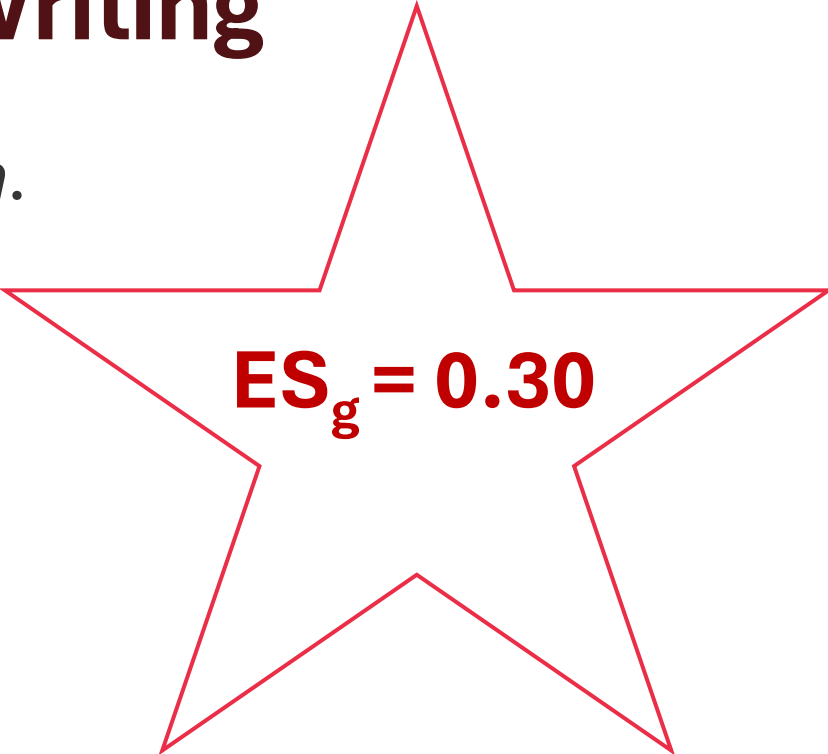
# #5: Connect writing and reading instruction

Cesar Chavez	TIDE	Cesar Chavez was important because he helped people get better pay. One important detail is that his parents were migrant workers and moved around a lot. This is important because he knew what it was like to get bad pay. Another important detail is that he created a union and in 1965, the union started a strike against the owners of the farm. This is important because he wanted people to have a good life. The last important detail is that he organized a march to the capital of California and one day the owners gave up and let them have better pay. This is important because the dreams of the workers came true and they can live a good life. this is why Cesar Chavez is important.
<p>During the 1920s, America was suffering from the Great Depression. This was a time when many people were poor. People could not find jobs, and there was not much food. People who worked on farms had to travel far to work. Many of these people went to California. There, they worked on farms and lived in camps. These people were called <b>migrant workers</b>.</p> <p>Cesar Chavez was a Mexican American man from Arizona. When he was a boy, his family became migrant workers. They moved to California to work on the farms. The conditions were poor. Their house had no electricity or even running water. Cesar and his family worked hard for many hours and they received little pay for their work.</p> <p>Cesar decided to do something about the bad conditions he and other migrant workers dealt with on the farms. He created a <b>union</b> for farm workers, which was a group that fought for better rights for farmers.</p> <p>In 1965, the union joined a <b>strike</b> against the owners of the farms. Cesar and the union were fighting for more money and better working conditions. Cesar encouraged people to use peaceful protests to fight for their rights. He organized a big march to the capital of California. He even went on a hunger strike, and he stopped eating food for 25 days to protest. Finally, Cesar succeeded. The owners of the farms gave Cesar and the farmers better pay and better working conditions.</p> <p>Chavez continued to fight for the rights of workers for his whole life. Today, he is remembered as a champion for working people everywhere.</p> <p>1. <b>Migrant workers</b>- People who move to different places to find a job. 2. <b>Union</b>- A group of people who work together to fight for their rights. 3. <b>Strike</b>- When people stop working in order to protest peacefully.</p>	<p>Topic</p> <p>Important Ideas</p> <p>Detailed Explanations</p> <p>Important idea</p> <p>Detailed explanation</p> <p>Important idea</p> <p>Detailed explanation</p> <p>Important idea</p> <p>Detailed explanation</p> <p>Ending</p> <p>Examine my parts (Are they all there?) <input type="checkbox"/> YES! <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Writing to Learn™ Course Materials</p> <p>SRSD Online 2016-23</p>	

# Recommendations for Teaching Writing

1. Write, *but more time for writing is not enough.*
2. Teach writing strategies.
3. Support students as they write.
4. Teach foundational writing skills.
5. Connect writing and reading instruction.

6. **Write across the curriculum (e.g., social studies, science).**



**ES<sub>g</sub> = 0.30**

## #6: Write across the curriculum



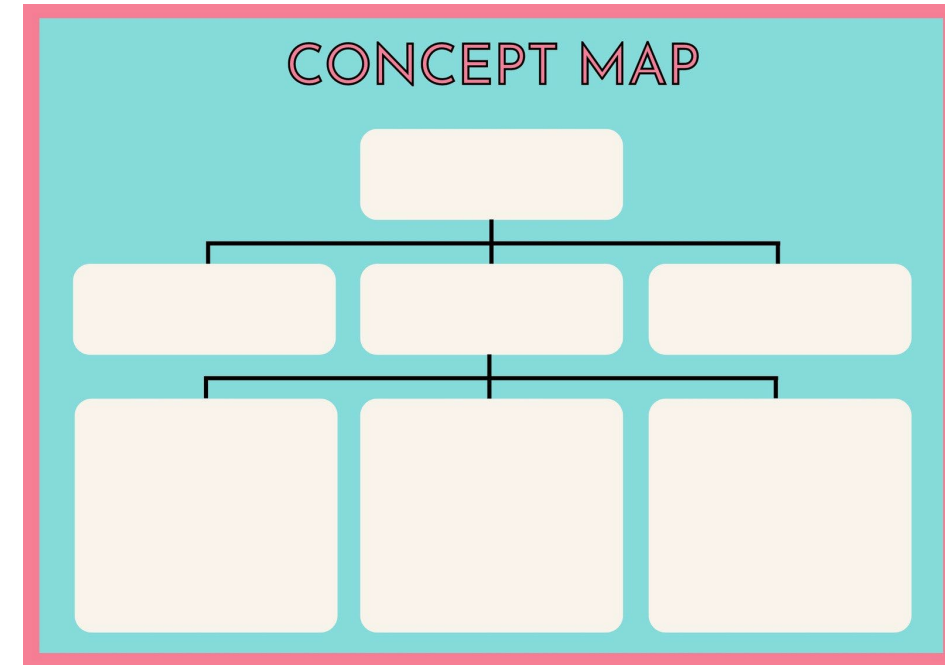
- Increases exposure to key content.
- Facilitates identification and organization of important information.
- Promotes active involvement and reflection.



# #6: Write across the curriculum

## *Concept Map Teaching Sequence*

- Teacher introduces and models note taking.
- Students complete a partially filled in concept map alone or with a partner.
- Students independently create concept maps or continue to use a template if needed (e.g., students with an IEP) as they use this tool for learning and to guide writing.





# Recommendations for Teaching Writing

1. Write, *but more time for writing is not enough*.
2. Teach writing strategies.
3. Support students as they write.
4. Teach foundational writing skills.
5. Connect writing and reading instruction.
6. Write across the curriculum (social studies, science, etc.).

# Additional Recommendations for Teaching Writing

- Teach creativity, critical thinking, and imagery.
- Teach summary writing.
- Enhance students' writing knowledge.
- Apply 21<sup>st</sup> century writing tools.
- Create a motivating writing environment.

**Source:** Graham, S., Collins, A. A., & Ciullo, S. (2024). Evidence-based recommendations for teaching writing. *Education 3-13*, 1-14.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2024.2357893>

EDUCATION 3-13  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2024.2357893>

   
Association for the Study of Primary Education  
Taylor & Francis Group



### Evidence-based recommendations for teaching writing

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**ABSTRACT**  
We present 11 evidence-based practices for teaching writing to students. These include recommendations for teaching writing to younger students (aged 5–11) and older students (aged 6–18). The recommendations are based on findings from close to 1000 investigations. The proposed recommendations are (1) students need to write, but writing is not enough; (2) students need to be supported as they write; (3) foundational writing skills (handwriting, spelling, grammar and sentence construction) need to be taught; (4) students become better writers when strategies for planning, revising and editing are taught; (5) teaching creativity, critical thinking and imagery can enhance writing; (6) teach students how to write summaries; (7) enhance students' knowledge about writing; (8) use twenty-first century writing tools in the classroom; (9) have students write across the curriculum; (10) connect reading and writing instruction and (11) create a motivating writing environment.

**KEYWORDS**  
Writing; composition; teaching; instruction; evidence-based practices

One of the most important skills students are taught at school is writing. While many children are introduced to writing before they begin formal schooling and writing and learning to write is not limited to educational settings (Bazerman et al. 2018), a basic responsibility of primary and secondary schools is to help students become competent writers. This is especially important objective given the value and versatility of writing.

Writing began as an accounting tool for recording quantity of goods in ancient Mesopotamia (Robinson 2022), but its uses greatly multiplied across the millennia (see Wyse 2017). Writing is now used for such mundane tasks as identifying who we are (one's signature) as well as more profound tasks such as telling others who we were (funerary inscriptions). It provides an efficient way for communicating and sharing information with others across space and time. Writing serves artistic, political, spiritual and personal purposes. These functions are illustrated in the use of writing to create imaginary worlds, political documents like the Great Charter of Freedoms signed by King John in 1215, recording spiritual experiences in journals so one can undergo introspection, and writing to express and understand one's emotions, respectively. For school-aged students, writing is especially important as writing about subject-matter content or material in textbooks makes it more comprehensible and memorable (Graham, Harris, and Santangelo 2015). In fact, students who do not learn to write well cannot draw fully on its power to promote and extend learning, and they are less likely to realise their educational, occupational or personal potential.

Unfortunately, many teachers worldwide report that their knowledge of how to teach writing effectively is not adequate (Graham and Rijalsardam 2016). There are many possible reasons for this, including poor preservice and inservice teacher preparation, but if students are to take full advantage of the power of writing in and outside of school, teachers must have access to

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# Engagement Activity Reflection

- You chose a district/school/teacher/student to think about today.
- Share the concept, idea, or strategy that you will use.
- Identify the idea, concept, or strategy that you would like to learn more about.

**How will you approach this future learning?**



# Contact Information

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# Wrap-Up



# Additional Resources

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- Combining Sentences
  - <https://www.readingrockets.org/classroom/classroom-strategies/sentence-combining>
- Grammar:
  - <https://www.readingrockets.org/resources/expert-qa/how-can-we-teach-grammar-more-effectively>
  - <https://www.readingrockets.org/videos/literacy-home/writing-sos-should-grammar-still-be-taught-school>



## More to Come!

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Stay updated with the NCSI newsletter:

<https://ncsi.wested.org/subscribe-ncsi-news/>

# Session Evaluation

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[https://meadowscenter.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3pL169kfSIyKQ62](https://meadowscenter.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3pL169kfSIyKQ62)



## Other Questions?

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# Thank You

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WestEd is the lead organization for NCSI. For more information about the work of WestEd, NCSI, and their partners, please visit [www.ncsi.wested.org](http://www.ncsi.wested.org) and [www.wested.org](http://www.wested.org)

