

Adolescent Literacy Research Summaries

Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools

"This report identifies 11 elements of current writing instruction found to be effective for helping adolescent students learn to write well and to use writing as a tool for learning. It is important to note that all of the elements are supported by rigorous research, but that even when used together, they do not constitute a full writing curriculum" (p. 4).

Eleven Elements of Effective Adolescent Writing Instruction

Elements	Instructional Description
Writing Strategies	Teach students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their compositions.
Summarizing	Explicitly and systematically teach students how to summarize texts.
Collaborative Writing	Use instructional arrangements in which adolescents work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions.
Specific Product Goals	Assign students specific, reachable goals for the writing they are to complete.
Word Processing	Use computers and word processors as instructional supports for writing assignments.
Sentence Combining	Teach students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences. <i>Note: Teaching students to focus on the function and practical application of grammar within the context of writing is more effective than teaching grammar as an independent, isolated activity.</i>
Prewriting	Engage students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their composition.
Inquiry Activities	Engage students in analyzing immediate, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for a particular writing task.
Process Writing Approach	Interweave a number of writing instructional activities in a workshop environment that stresses extended writing opportunities, writing for authentic audiences, personalized instruction, and cycles of writing.
Study of Models	Provide students with opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing.
Writing for Content Learning	Use writing as a tool for learning content material.

REFERENCE: Graham & Perin, 2007; http://www.all4ed.org/publication_material/reports/writing_next.

Writing to Read: Evidence for How Writing Can Improve Reading

“This report identifies a cluster of closely related instructional practices shown to be effective in improving students’ reading. . . . all of the *Writing to Read* instructional recommendations have shown clear results for improving students’ reading. Nonetheless, even when used together these practices do not constitute a full curriculum. The writing practices described in this report should be used by educators in a flexible and thoughtful way to support students’ learning (p. 6).

Writing Practices That Enhance Students’ Reading

Instructional Practices	Description
Have students write about the texts they read.	<p>Students’ comprehension of science, social studies, and language arts texts is improved when they write about what they read, specifically when they</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to a text in writing (writing personal reactions, analyzing and interpreting the text); • write summaries of a text; • write notes about a text; and • answer questions about a text in writing, or create and answer written questions about a text.
Teach students the writing skills and processes that go into creating text.	<p>Students’ reading skills and comprehension are improved by learning the skills and processes that go into creating text, specifically when teachers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teach the process of writing, text structures for writing, and paragraph or sentence construction skills (improves reading comprehension); • teach spelling and sentence construction skills (improves reading fluency); and • teach spelling skills (improves word reading skills).
Increase how much students write.	Students’ reading comprehension is improved by having them increase how often they produce their own texts.

REFERENCE: Graham & Hebert, 2010; <http://carnegie.org/publications/search-publications/pub/315/>.