**Evidence-Based Practice in Writing Instruction: A Review of Reviews**

by Steve Graham, Karen R. Harris, and Amber B. Chambers

Handbook of Writing Research, 2nd edition (2016) pp. 211-226

The bulleted items add a few details from the meta-analysis by Graham, Harris,

and Chambers. The information in the boxes is how Growing Writers meets the

recommendation.

1. Increase time for writing

* Increase the amount of time students spend on writing.
* Have students write for a variety of purposes.

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| Many teachers don’t like to teach writing because it’s difficult. Growing Writers makes teaching writing simple, fun, and successful. Students and teachers like doing it and will want to spend more time on writing.  Students learn that writing is a way to express an opinion, communicate with others, entertain, express feelings, and tell what they know. |

1. Create a supportive writing environment

* Set clear and specific goals for students’ writing.
* Help students work together.
* Do prewriting activities.
* Believe your students are capable of writing and have high expectations.
* Adapt writing assignments and instruction to meet the needs of individual students.

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| Growing Writers has end of the year writing goals for each grade level it serves (K-2). Every writing lesson has two very specific and measurable objectives. Each workbook (12-15 lessons) has the goals listed in the back and students are assessed at the end.  In some of the lessons students work with a partner to complete the assignment, and there is frequent sharing of work so that students can learn from each other.  Daily prewriting activities include a whole group time to introduce the work and watch the teacher model it (“I do it”), a time where the teacher guides students in completing the first section of the work (“We do it”), and independent practice.  Growing Writers has built in differentiation because of an innovative design called the “expandable lesson”. The lessons are designed to build skills in a step-by-step way so that it is possible to have high expectations for every student. |

1. Teach writing skills, strategies, knowledge, and motivation

* Teach transcription skills (handwriting, typing, and spelling).
* Teach sentence construction and grammar.
* Give students examples of what good writing looks like to enhance motivation.

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| Handwriting, sentence construction, and grammar are explicitly taught in Growing Writers. Good writing is modeled every day.  Students are given examples of good writing at the level they are ready for, and peer examples of good writing are shared regularly. Students are motivated to write because they love to share their work. |

1. Provide feedback

* Provide feedback about student writing and progress.
* Help students evaluate their own writing.
* Allow for peer feedback.

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| Immediate feedback is a big part of Growing Writers. In each lesson the teacher is instructed to give feedback on every student’s skill work and have them fix it the same day. If it isn’t possible to fix it that day, time is built-in to the curriculum for “Fix it up” days so that all incorrect skill work is corrected.  Students are encouraged to find their own mistakes – for example, the teacher may say “There is one mistake in this sentence. See if you can find it.”  There is a daily sharing time where students can give positive feedback to each other, and, as the year progresses, point out a mistake. |

1. Use 21st century writing tools.

* Use word processing, including programs that facilitate one or more aspect of writing such as word choice or planning.

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| Growing Writers focuses on handwriting because the research shows the immense benefits of handwriting at all grade levels. Nationally known programs such as Handwriting Without Tears do not recommend having children rely on typing skills for composition in the early grades. |

1. Use writing as a tool to support student learning.

* Have students write about content material presented in class.
* Write for a variety of purposes.

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| Each Growing Writers lesson has a skills page and a free writing or creative challenge. Teachers can use some of the free writing days to ask students to respond to something they are learning in class.  Each grade level has lessons on opinion writing, personal narrative, and informative writing. |