

DoubleTake

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Research Alert

The Writing Standards—And Evidence-Based Practices

If you're wondering how well the writing portions of the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and literacy reflect evidence-based practices, a new study looks at just that. Researchers from Michigan State University and the University of Connecticut analyzed the new writing standards to see whether they reference 36 practices that have been shown to improve writing skills. They found that the standards signal fewer than half of these practices in any given grade.

On the positive side, the following practices were “strongly” highlighted in all—or most—K–12 grades:

- Providing extra time for writing.
- Teaching prewriting, planning, and drafting.
- Teaching students how to use visual images to enhance creativity in writing.
- Teaching text structure.
- Using a word processor as a primary tool for composition.
- Teaching transcription skills, such as spelling, handwriting, and keyboarding.

However, the following practices with a strong research base *weren't* highlighted in the writing standards for all or most grades:

- Free writing.
- Process writing instruction, in which students write for real purposes and audiences, engage in cycles of planning and reviewing, and take ownership of their writing projects.
- Strategy instruction, in which students are taught strategies for planning, drafting, revising, and editing text.

- Using assistive technology, such as spelling and grammar checkers and software for formatting text.
- Instruction in summarization.
- Self-regulation and metacognitive reflection.
- Using rubrics.



The authors noted that several practices that directly affect writing performance—such as teaching grammar skills and motivating students to write—weren't addressed at all in the new standards.

Authored by Gary A. Troia and Natalie G. Olinghouse, the report, titled “The Common Core State Standards and Evidence-Based Educational Practices: The Case of Writing,” appeared in the Fall 2013 issue of *School Psychology Review*.



World Spin

How to Write an Essay

In South Korea, high schools will soon offer essay writing as an optional subject to help students perform better on the essays they're required to write in their college entrance exams. These essays count heavily toward admission. At Seoul National University, for example, essay scores account for 30 percent of the evaluation, with standardized testing scores accounting for 60 percent and grade point average for just 10 percent.

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