



Integrate writing and reading to emphasize key writing features



Combining both writing and reading into classroom instruction and assignments supports students in learning essential features of effective texts. By reviewing and reflecting on exemplar texts, students can strengthen their writing.

How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teach students to understand that both writers and readers use similar strategies, knowledge, and skills to create meaning.
2. Use a variety of written exemplars to highlight the key features of texts.

Potential roadblocks

1. Teaching writing and reading aren't central to my discipline. I have too much content to teach already, and I don't have time to develop students' writing skills as well.
2. My school teaches reading (or literature) and writing separately. How can I integrate reading and writing?
3. My students have trouble understanding the content of their reading, let alone writing about it.

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Reference: Graham, S., Bruch, J., Fitzgerald, J., Friedrich, L., Furgeson, J., Greene, K., . . . Smither Wulsin, C. (2016). *Teaching secondary students to write effectively* (NCEE 2017-4002). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Retrieved from <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/22>



How to carry out the recommendation

1. Teach students to understand that both writers and readers use similar strategies, knowledge, and skills to create meaning.

To best identify the connection between reading and writing for students, teachers should directly state the connection between a concept students just read and how they can apply a similar word structure to strengthen their writing. Teachers can also have students imagine the senses an author used or provide annotations in texts to highlight how writers attempt to engage the readers through the use of context. Finally, students can utilize cognitive-strategy activities to guide student reflection. Sample activities can be found on pages 34–36 of the practice guide referenced on the first page.

Type of Feedback	Purpose	Outcome
Teacher Feedback	To highlight the strengths, successes, and challenges of student writing	Scaffolds instruction and customizes supports for the student’s text and writing process
Peer Feedback	To highlight the strengths, successes, and challenges of student writing	Supports student in developing a deeper understanding of effective writing and constructive feedback
Self-Assessments	To review one’s own writing as a reader	Identifies areas of text that require clarification and helps raise awareness of where student has grown and in which areas she or he still needs support

2. Use a variety of written exemplars to highlight the key features of texts.

Exemplar texts should be used to illustrate specific features of effective writing, such as organization and structure, ideation, grammar, punctuation, voice, style, and word choice. These texts can exemplify specific learning objectives being taught or diverse writing qualities. For a detailed list of key features for different text types, review pages 36–39 in the practice guide.

Potential roadblocks and how to address them

Roadblock	Suggested Approach
<i>Teaching writing and reading aren't central to my discipline. I have too much content to teach already, and I don't have time to develop students' writing skills as well.</i>	Reading and writing activities support student learning, retention, and critical thinking in all content areas. For example, in math, students will need to write to verify and support their logical reasoning. Broadening the definition of reading and writing will help teachers realize that all content areas require reading and writing. Collaborating with subject-matter and grade-level colleagues can support reading and writing instruction across all content areas.
<i>My school teaches reading (or literature) and writing separately. How can I integrate reading and writing?</i>	In classes that focus on teaching writing, students can read and analyze exemplary texts as models to emulate in their writing. In classes that focus on teaching reading, teachers can offer opportunities for students to prepare short analytical writing products such as short journal entries after each chapter in a book to better identify themes and key points.
<i>My students have trouble understanding the content of their reading, let alone writing about it.</i>	Writing is a tool that helps student develop a deeper understanding of what they are reading. Teachers can consider differentiating starting texts for students and gradually increasing the goals for each student.



For more information on the research evidence and references to support this recommendation, or for more detailed explanation from the What Works Clearinghouse committee who developed this recommendation, please refer to the practice guide cited at the bottom of the first page of this document.