

Revising. Revising refers to the process of rewriting text to improve it. Although revising is critically important to the writing process (Graves, 1983), young writers are unlikely to revise without strong adult encouragement and support. Developing writers often fail to recognize a need for revision, but if someone points out to them specific areas of text that would benefit from repair, they often can repair the text successfully (Beal, 1993, 1996). Thus, children’s low rate of revision is often due, not to an inability to repair the text, but a failure to detect that the text needs to be revised. Fortunately, the results from several intervention studies show that comprehension monitoring can be taught effectively and efficiently to children in the classroom, which results in improvements in revising activity.

Step Up to Writing Instruction: To encourage revision throughout the writing process, students are taught comprehension monitoring skills to detect textual problems (Beals, 1996). Students are engaged in revising activities that call for improving word choice, sentence structure, and sentence variety. *Step Up to Writing* provides models of the kind of writing teachers want students to produce, along with examples of what not write: vague, poorly organized writing. Students are given checklists and rubrics to evaluate their own essays and papers written by others, encouraged to write multiple drafts, given opportunities to revise, and are not expected to produce a perfect draft the first time.

In addition to these cognitive processes, affective, motivational and social context processes influence the writing acquisition process. Research confirms that affect towards writing impacts students’ response to writing intervention; repeated practice in writing prevents work-avoidance; and scaffolding of instruction increases children’s learning (Berninger et al., 1995). Through direct instructions, step-by-step guidelines, and detailed examples, coupled with guided, interactive, and independent writing practice, *Step Up to Writing* makes writing easier, faster, and more rewarding.

Principles of Instruction

In addition to teaching each step in the writing process, the principles of instruction in *Step Up to Writing* are well proven. *Step Up to Writing* addresses the instructional variables—explicit and systematic instruction, collaborative learning, and scaffolded teaching of the writing process—associated with improved outcomes as identified in syntheses of research (Gersten and Baker, 2001; Swanson, Hoskyn, and Lee, 1999; Vaughn, Gersten, and Chard, 2000; National Reading Panel, 2000).

Skills in *Step Up to Writing* are sequenced beginning with the teacher talking and using examples, and eliciting frequent verbal responses from the students. Modeling, guided practice, and extended interactive practice with frequent feedback on strengths and weaknesses of student work are provided for each new skill ensuring that students experience success and persist in writing activities. Other research-supported strategies used are graphic representations or organizers of text, which are used extensively throughout the program. *Step Up to Writing* applies the research-supported practice— explicitly teaching the conventions of writing genres (Gersten and Baker, 2001; National Reading Panel, 2000)—through the use of text structure guides for summary, persuasive, expository, and narrative writing.

In a research summary, Swanson (1999) confirmed the importance of carefully controlling the difficulty of higher-order tasks. *Step Up to Writing* applies this researchvalidated strategy by breaking down each higher order writing process into small sequential steps. Specifically, teachers furnish parts of an essay/paragraph—topic sentences and conclusions—to allow students to focus on other parts of the writing process—developing supports, using logic, and creating informal outlines—before delving into autonomous writing.

Using the content material required for other classes, students are taught strategies to connect reading and writing. Students are able to learn active reading and higher-order reasoning skills when teachers talk through and model active reading, comprehension monitoring, free responses to literature, analysis, and note-taking strategies. Research shows that students’ comprehension improves through direct explanation and modeling of strategies, relating what they read with background knowledge (Pressley and Wharton- McDonald, 1997; Williams, 1998). In *Step Up to Writing*, students are taught to generate and answer questions while they read, that elicit both factual and inferential 4 interpretations of text. Teachers explicitly teach strategies for generating text summaries and a paragraph response and thesis statement that logically supports the answer to questions posed.

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**Step Up to Writing
meets ESSA's
"Demonstrates a
Rationale"
evidence criteria**

ESSA Evidence EXPLAINED

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) emphasizes "evidence-based" approaches that have demonstrated a statistically significant positive effect on student outcomes.

ESSA identifies these levels of evidence:

1. Strong
2. Moderate
3. Promising
4. Demonstrates a rationale

Evidence levels are used to classify an activity, strategy, or intervention based on the research study design.



Step Up to Writing® Fourth Edition is unparalleled writing instruction designed for learners of all levels and types in **grades K-12**. From the most fragile writers to those who are gifted and talented, **Step Up to Writing** offers content and strategies to meet students at their level of need and move them forward.

Implementing **Step Up to Writing** in every grade establishes a common writing language across grade levels and content areas. The program provides:

- Multimodal instruction
- Flexible implementation options
- Compatibility with any core curriculum
- Support for writing across all content areas

What Does the Evidence Say About *Step Up to Writing*?

4 "Demonstrates a Rationale" Evidence Criteria	Alignment to Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes • Includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention ideally producing promising evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Forty eighth grade students with and without learning disabilities in an inclusive classroom participated in an adapted Step Up to Writing (Auman, 2002) intervention program. ✓ The intervention targeted expository essays and composing topic, detail, transitional, and concluding sentences. ✓ A repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that both students with and without disabilities made significant improvements in expository writing skills as measured on the state's criterion reference test for written expression.

*Study used for ESSA classification: Cihak, D. F., & Castle, K. (2011). Improving expository writing skills with explicit and strategy instructional methods in inclusive middle school classrooms. *International Journal of Special Education*, 26(3), 106-113.

Evidence Summary

The purpose of the Cihak & Castle (2011) study was to examine the effects of an adapted **Step Up to Writing** (Auman, 2002) program for classroom practice for students with and without learning disabilities. Improvements in the quality of writing emerged after students had received the writing intervention. Overall, students wrote expository essays that were qualitatively better, which were generally free from mechanical errors and language misuse.

This study confirmed previous studies that explicit and strategy instructional methods successfully improved the written expression of students with learning disabilities. Moreover, this study extends previous research by investigating large-scale classroom practices that included students with and without learning disabilities in an inclusive general education classroom.

Key findings from the study include:

- At the onset of the study, no students with learning disabilities performed competent writing skills according to the writing assessment scoring rubric. Moreover, 67 percent of students without learning disabilities demonstrated competency on the writing assessment.
- After the writing intervention, 84 percent of students with learning disabilities and 100 percent of students without learning disabilities demonstrated expository writing competency.
- Additionally, students were observed applying the expository writing skills and strategies to other assignments and in other classes.

With Implementation of the **Step Up to Writing** Intervention Program

