

Handbook Of Research On Teaching Young Writers

**Fifth Edition
2026**

Volume I

Ross Young & Felicity Ferguson

About The Authors

The Writing For Pleasure Centre

The Writing For Pleasure Centre functions both as a think tank and as an action research community. The result is that we are continually engaged in sharing effective practices, case studies and research findings.

The mission of The Writing For Pleasure Centre is to help all young people become passionate and successful writers. We look to accomplish this goal by investigating what world-class writing teaching might be. We do this through:

- Our school residencies and teacher training workshops.
- Curriculum development and creating resources.
- Conducting, disseminating and publishing research.
- Working with children, teachers, school leaders, teacher-educators and charities.

It's our hope that teachers regard The Writing For Pleasure Centre as a place where they can access a specialist network and continued professional development that is free. If you're new to the idea of a Writing For Pleasure pedagogy, you can read all about it at: writing4pleasure.com

Ross Young & Felicity Ferguson are the founders of The Writing For Pleasure Centre and authors of *The Science Of Teaching Primary Writing*, *Writing For Pleasure: Theory, Research & Practice*, *Real-World Writers: A Handbook For Teaching Writing With 7-11 Year Olds*, *Supporting Children With SEND To Be Great Writers: A Guide For Teachers And SENCOs* and *A Teacher's Guide To Writing With Multilingual Children*.

They both hold master degrees in applied linguistics in education. As passionate writer-teachers, they now work around the UK and abroad helping teachers and schools develop extraordinary young writers. They both help convene The United Kingdom Literacy Association's international Teaching Writing Special Interest Group.

Ross was the lead researcher on 'What is it Writing For Pleasure teachers do that makes the difference?' Their work continues to focus on the learning and teaching of young writers and is informed by their ongoing work with classroom teachers and early years educators.

Preface

Some years ago, we were teaching at our local primary school and we came to the conclusion that we were probably the worst teachers of writing in the whole entire world. We hated doing it, we hated teaching it, and our students got terrible results. Our students also hated writing and they hated us teaching it too!

Research has since confirmed why this was, and it appears that we were far from alone. Some of you might feel like this too. The fact is that many of us didn't receive the writerly education we should have had while we were at school. We know this because research shows that a great number of teachers feel deep shame about their own writing abilities, and consequently have grown up disliking writing. A friend of ours, Paul Gardner, carried out some investigations, and found that less than 2% of teachers wrote with or for pleasure, with half reporting that they had never felt any pleasure from writing in their lives (Gardner 2014). To make matters worse, the research surrounding ITE reveals that the majority of teachers around the world leave their teacher training feeling ill-prepared to teach writing.

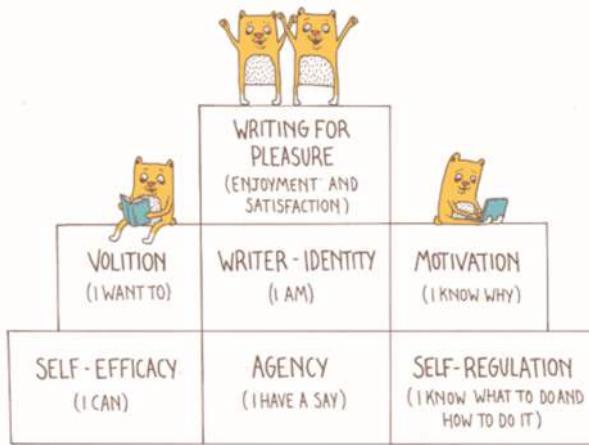
This is a serious problem, because how we were taught writing at school has a strong influence on how we feel about the subject, how we think it should be taught and what we know about it - our writerly knowledge. Unfortunately, it appears from the research that, as teachers, we regularly copy the same failed writing teaching that we once received (Young & Ferguson 2021a). We should point out that there is of course a significant minority of teachers to whom this doesn't apply - but it certainly applied to us.

We tried all the popular approaches in the UK at the time and none of them worked. We were frustrated. We wanted to do something about it. We decided that we would build a writing pedagogy from scratch and base it on what the science and research evidence said was the most effective and affecting practice (Young & Ferguson 2021a, 2022a). We were no longer going to leave things to chance.

We conducted a total of twenty-three literature reviews spanning more than fifty years of scientific research. First, we started with the meta-analyses. For those who might not be familiar with the term, a meta-analysis is where a researcher will group many scientific studies on a particular subject in order to identify recurring patterns of effectiveness. We then read what case studies tell us about what the best performing writing teachers do in their classrooms which makes the difference. We discovered that there are 14 enduring principles which represent the most effective teaching practice. These principles all have a track record of raising standards and accelerating progress in writing. The principles are:

1. Build a community of writers
2. Treat every child as a writer
3. Read, share, think and talk about writing
4. Pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects
5. Teach the writing processes
6. Set writing goals
7. Be reassuringly consistent
8. Pursue personal writing projects
9. Balance composition & transcription
10. Teach daily mini-lessons
11. Be a writer-teacher
12. Pupil-conference: meet children where they are
13. Connect reading & writing
14. Interconnect the principles

Interestingly, we noted that there were also six affective needs (relating to the emotions) that teachers should attend to in order to help children write happily and successfully. These needs are:



Young & Ferguson's (2021a) hierarchy of emotional writing needs

Once these principles and affective needs were identified, we reviewed the research on each one to help us better understand what we could be doing in our classroom to make the difference. In the end, we decided to call our approach the *Writing For Pleasure* approach. And now, for us, *Writing For Pleasure* has become simply a synonym for world-class writing teaching.

We began using this new approach, and it was having a transformative impact on our students. We moved to another school to see if it would work in another context, and it did. We then started to write about the pedagogy online, and other teachers started reporting that they were getting the same great results that we were.

Fast forward to 2019, and we were lucky enough to be given a research grant in conjunction with the Goldsmiths' Company and University Of Sussex. We travelled around to see what it was these other 'Writing For Pleasure' teachers were doing. What was special about this study was that, to participate, the teachers had to show that they had a track record for accelerating children's progress, and that their children reported that they loved to write and felt their affective writerly needs were being met.

What we found out from all this work has since been published as a book called *Writing For Pleasure: Theory, Research & Practice* (Young & Ferguson 2021a) and the establishment of The Writing For Pleasure Centre.

The Writing For Pleasure Centre is now informed by over 1000 pieces of literature, case study work, action research by teachers in our affiliate schools, and empirical research on the subject of teaching writing.

The Writing For Pleasure approach involves children and teachers writing together every single day. They write for many different purposes, and for a variety of audiences. They are moved to write about what they are most knowledgeable and passionate about. They also write to deepen their responses and understandings of what they read. They write to transform their own (and others') thinking about what they learn in the wider curriculum subjects. They write to entertain, to paint with words, to persuade and share their opinions, to teach others, to make a record of things they don't want to forget, and to reflect on their own thoughts and personal experiences. They write about themselves and their cultures. They also write to reflect and sustain the cultures of people they might not have met. They share their writing and talk about themselves as writers with their peers, teachers and caregivers. They learn how to live the writer's life.

Pupils explore new genres of writing through whole class writing projects. Together, they discuss the purpose of the writing project, explore its basic features, and study mentor texts together. They consider who they would like to write their pieces for and what they would like to write about most. Students are taught how to use the same features and expert techniques they identified from the mentor texts in their own compositions. They learn how to attend to their spellings, handwriting, grammar, and sentence construction. This helps them write happily and fluently. Pupils acquire a great deal of craft knowledge – what we call *craft moves*. This includes writerly strategies and techniques for negotiating the writing processes. We want children to know how they can take a germ of an idea and see it through to publication independently and successfully. Students are supported by being provided with clear processes and ambitious writing goals. They are given ample time and instruction in how to plan and how to improve on what they have already written through specific revision and proof-reading sessions.

Pupils receive daily in-the-moment verbal feedback and responsive assessment-based individualised instruction through teacher-pupil conferencing. These conversations are designed to push the writer and move their writing forward. Pupils are given many opportunities to discuss their compositions with their teachers and peers. At least one hour a day is devoted to the explicit teaching of writing and, within this time, children are engaged in writing meaningfully for a sustained period. We believe this is the only way they can learn about the discipline of writing

and of being a writer. Across a school day, children also have opportunities to write about their reading and in response to their learning in other subjects. Importantly, pupils have access to personal writing journals which travel freely between home and school. We want children to live the writer's life and to be in a constant state of composition.

Genuine writing communities are created in classrooms. Children write in positive and enthusiastic writing environments which are headed up by passionate writer-teachers. Classrooms feel like a mixture of creative writing workshops and professional publishing houses. The approach is rigorous, highly-organised and reassuringly consistent. Pupils are encouraged to take risks and to be innovative, but also to write with focus and serious intent. Teaching is responsive - depending on what individual children need instruction in most. Whether they are in Nursery or Year Six and regardless of where they are in their language development or writerly experience, all children are treated as writers and are helped not only to write pieces which are successful in terms of the objectives of the curriculum but also meaningful to them as young authors.

Felicity Ferguson & Ross Young

Introduction

This handbook addresses some of the major aspects of teaching writing. The aim is to create an invaluable reference guide for all teachers. This is our third edition. We hope to update this handbook every year to take account of the latest research and thinking. We would like this handbook to support teachers in developing sound subject knowledge and exceptional classroom practice. We have tried to make the research as accessible as possible. The handbook includes:

- Over 1000 research entries covering the major aspects of developing students as writers.
- Short abstracts and keyword tags to help teachers find the research they are looking for.
- An analysis of the analysis and what it is the best performing writing teachers do that makes the difference.
- A chapter dedicated to each of the 14 principles of world-class writing teaching.
- Research on the early teaching of writing including compositional development, phonics, encoding, spelling, letter formation and handwriting.
- Extended entries on major topics such as speaking and listening, reading/writing connection, multilingualism, special educational needs and disabilities, and social and emotional disorders.
- Focused chapters on the affective needs of student writers, including: self-efficacy (confidence), self-regulation (competence and independence), agency, motivation and writer-identity.
- Essential literature and suggested reading offered at the end of each chapter.

This handbook is a useful resource for anyone interested in developing world-class writing teaching. Teachers should find what is shared within these pages utterly interesting, informed and helpful.

We have done our best with this third edition to cover many aspects of writing teaching in the best way we can. We have provided a variety of research, from different disciplines, and from a variety of perspectives. We've tried to provide a balance between the very latest emerging research and classic studies which contain profound insights and have stood the test of time. If you think some important research entries are missing, then please contact us. You can contact us through our website at: www.writing4pleasure.com/contact

New to this fifth edition:

- **Our handbook now comes in two volumes.**
 - Volume one covers affective factors in children's writing development. It also summarises findings from meta-analyses, case studies, and organisational reports on world-class writing teaching.
 - Volume two presents the 14 principles of world-class writing teaching.
- **This edition also includes the following updates.**
 - Additional reading on theories of writing development.
 - Recommended reading on initial teacher education.
 - Significant additions to the motivation and writer identity chapters.
 - Expanded commentary on writing interventions, supporting children with special educational needs, and developing multilingual writers.
 - A new section on parental/home support for writing
 - A new section on writing and AI, including the use of large language models.
 - Major additions on the importance of a consistent approach to teaching writing in the early years.
 - Further additions on supporting secondary students.
 - Expanded reading on early word writing, letter formation, handwriting, encoding, and spelling.
 - Significant new reading in the personal writing projects chapter.
 - Major additions to the reading and writing connection chapter.

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Chapter 1

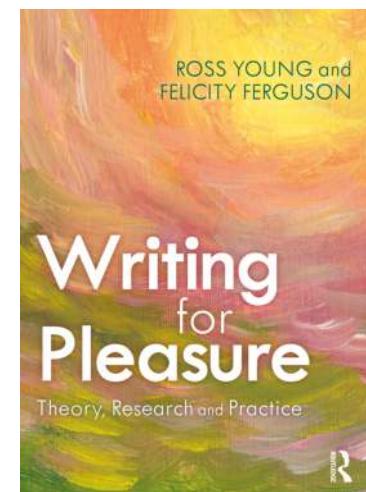
What Sort Of Writing Teacher Are You? What Sort Of Writing Teacher Do You Want To Be?: The Different Perspectives On Teaching Writing

Introduction

This chapter introduces the most common orientations teachers have towards the teaching of writing and of young writers. It gives a detailed overview of the most popular approaches to teaching writing, including:

- The presentational or skills-based view of writing
- The naturalistic self-expressionist orientation
- The structuralist and genre-based approach
- The literature-based model
- The critical literacy and multiliteracy perspective
- The environmental and community orientation

Discussion is had about how writing is perceived in each of these orientations, the relationship between the teacher and their pupils, the teachers' curricular priorities, and the typical teaching strategies they might employ. The limitations of each approach are also examined and compared. Finally, it's proposed that, whilst these orientations may seem to be in conflict with one another, it may actually be more profitable for teachers to consider how parts of each orientation can be utilised dynamically within a classroom pedagogy to help turn the tide of children's historic underachievement in writing, and attend to their affective needs and to their indifference to or active dislike of writing.

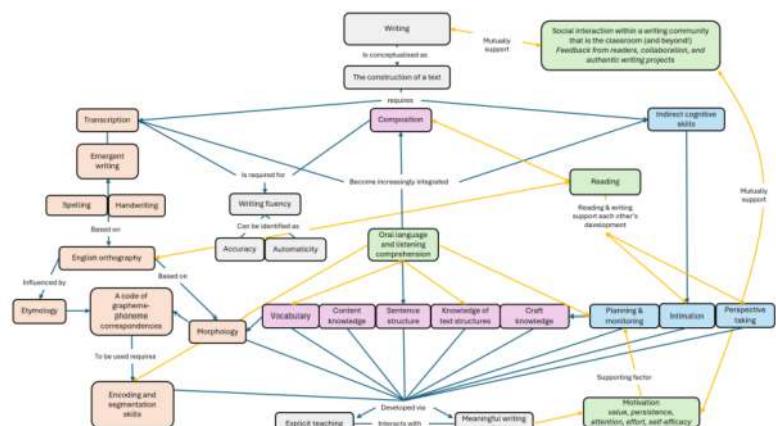


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Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2025) Visualising the science of writing: The Writing Map explained Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre

This article introduces a comprehensive *Writing Map* designed by *The Writing For Pleasure Centre* to help educators understand the scientific and developmental foundations of writing.

The framework conceptualises writing as a complex task requiring the integration of transcription, composition, and cognitive skills, which evolve from basic scribbling to sophisticated audience awareness. It emphasises that proficiency is achieved through a combination of explicit instruction and authentic writing experiences within a supportive social community.



The material also highlights the critical roles of oral language, reading, and student motivation in developing writing fluency. Ultimately, the article offers a strategic guide for schools to refine their curriculum and teaching methods based on research-informed principles.

The following are the key implications for classroom practice to support the development of young writers:

- **Balance Explicit Teaching with Meaningful Experiences:** Educators should ensure that explicit instruction (such as spelling and grammar lessons) interacts directly with meaningful writing experiences (such as authentic class projects), as children are more likely to apply taught skills when they see their value in practice.
- **Prioritise Transcription Fluency:** Schools must provide systematic instruction in encoding, handwriting, and spelling to build transcription fluency. Achieving automaticity in these skills is essential because it allows students to translate their thoughts to paper quickly, freeing up mental energy for the more complex task of composition.

- **Utilise "Reading as Writers":** Teachers should encourage students to analyse mentor texts that realistically match the writing they are attempting. This helps children understand text structures, genre features, and "craft moves" they can then emulate in their own work.
- **Embed Oral Language Support:** Practice should include opportunities for storytelling, oral rehearsals, and "self-talk" during the writing process. Talking at a "text level" helps children develop fluency and cohesion before they begin the physical act of transcribing.
- **Explicitly Teach Cognitive Strategies:** Educators should provide instruction on self-regulation and executive functions, such as how to generate ideas, plan, draft, revise, and proofread.
- **Cultivate a Writing Community:** Writing should be treated as a social activity. Practice should include writing alongside teachers and peers, receiving feedback, and publishing or performing work for an audience to build a sense of purpose and social recognition.
- **Nurture Motivation and Agency:** Teachers should help students see the value and purpose of their writing to increase their persistence and effort. This can be achieved through personal writing projects and allowing students to develop their own unique "writer identity" and style.
- **Support the Developmental Trajectory:** Recognise that writing development is a gradual process. Teachers should support children as they move from "writing-telling" (listing ideas) to "writing-transforming" (planning and revising) and finally to "writing-crafting" (considering the audience's needs).

Free access: [LINK](#)

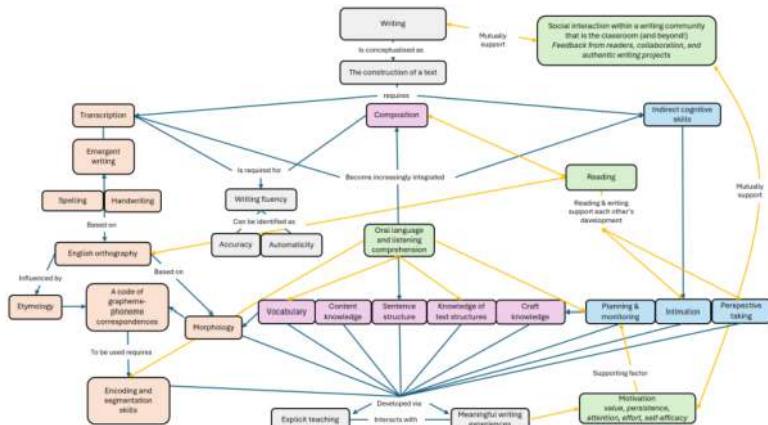
Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2025) The Writing Map & evidence-informed writing teaching Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre

The article shows how The Writing For Pleasure Centre's *Writing Map* can bridge the gap between academic theory and effective classroom instruction.

It defines writing as the active construction of text to share meaning, requiring the integration of transcription, composition, and cognitive skills.

The guide details evidence-informed strategies for teaching handwriting and spelling, while also highlighting the importance of *Self-Regulated Strategy Development* to build authorial craft. By creating a supportive writing community, educators can ensure students engage in authentic projects that boost motivation and fluency. Ultimately, the article serves as a practical manual for school leaders to refine their curriculum through explicit teaching and meaningful, purpose-driven writing experiences.



Here are the key implications for classroom practice to support effective writing development:

- **Prioritise explicit transcription instruction:** Dedicate 60–75 minutes per week to spelling (ideally 10–15 minutes daily) and 10–20 minutes daily for handwriting instruction and practice. This instruction should be distinct from general reading and writing lessons.
- **Support emergent writing as a bridge:** Recognise and accept scribbles, marks, and letter-like shapes in Nursery and Reception as a temporary scaffold. Wean children onto "informed spellings" once phonics and encoding strategies are introduced.
- **Adopt the SRSD framework:** Use Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) to teach craft knowledge, sentence structures, and planning. This involves a sequence of Discussing the move, Modelling it live (the 'I' stage), and Inviting children to apply it to their own writing that same day (the 'We' and 'You' stages).
- **Establish a "Community of Writers":** Create a classroom culture that functions as a writing community, where teachers act as writer-teachers and children engage in purposeful, authentic projects rather than isolated exercises.
- **Utilise Mentor Texts for Composition:** Instead of arbitrary success criteria, read and discuss mentor texts that realistically match the children's goals. Use these to collaboratively generate "product goals" that define what makes a text successful.
- **Integrate Oral Language and Rehearsal:** Allow time for children to "talk their story" or act it out before writing. Encourage "write a little – share a little" routines and the use of *Author's Chair* to facilitate perspective-taking and feedback.
- **Manage Cognitive Load with Daily Goals:** Move away from "front-loading" instruction at the start of a unit. Instead, set daily process goals and provide individualised verbal feedback during drafting to help children manage the complex components of composition.
- **Nurture Writing Motivation:** Attend to the five core drivers of motivation: ensuring student success,

building a positive classroom culture, identifying clear motives for writing, instilling a writerly identity, and providing buy-in through choice and control.

- **Develop Fluency through Daily Application:** Ensure children from Nursery to Year Two have daily dedicated writing time to compose thousands of sentences and hundreds of short compositions, which helps internalise skills and build automaticity.
- **Use Visual Aids and Scaffolds:** Display "Old way / New way" posters to celebrate informed spelling attempts. Provide instructional posters that children can consult independently to self-regulate their learning during writing time.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; balance composition and transcription; emergent writing; early word writing; self regulation strategy development instruction; create a community of writers; be a writer teacher; pupil-conferencing; live verbal feedback; set product goals; genre study; mentor texts; set process goals; explicit writing instruction; meaningful writing experiences; oral language; read, share, think and talk about writing; motivation; writing fluency; scaffolding

Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2025) Six discourses, four philosophies, one framework: A critical reading of the DfE's writing guidance Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre

This article evaluates the Department for Education's *Writing Framework* by applying two established academic models to assess its educational breadth. Using Ivanić's six discourses and Fulkerson's four philosophies, the analysis highlights that while the government guidance excels in teaching technical skills and compositional processes, it frequently overlooks the creative and sociopolitical dimensions of literacy.

The article argues that an over-reliance on formalist accuracy risks producing pupils who are proficient technicians but lack a distinct writerly voice or a sense of social purpose. To address these gaps, the authors advocate for a more balanced pedagogy that integrates authentic audiences, personal passion projects, and diverse mentor texts. Ultimately, the document serves as a guide for schools to supplement the national framework, ensuring writing remains a meaningful and identity-forming activity rather than a mere exercise in mechanics.

Drawing on the analysis of the DfE's *Writing Framework*, there are several key implications for educational practice. The article suggests that while technical skills are vital, schools should strive for a balanced pedagogy that prevents "technical mastery" from becoming an end in itself.

1. Curriculum Planning and Balance

- Annotate planning templates: When designing long-term plans or choosing writing schemes, schools should explicitly identify which "discourses" (skills, creativity, process, genre, social practices, sociopolitical) and "philosophies" (formalist, expressivist, mimetic, rhetorical) are being served by each unit.
- Protect time for personal expression: To prevent a heavy skills-based agenda from "crowding out" a child's development, schools should schedule regular, sustained, and protected time for personal passion projects, writing journals, and portfolio development.

2. Pedagogy and Classroom Routines

- Develop metacognitive control: Beyond teacher-led scaffolding, practitioners should implement routines that help students monitor their own composing strategies. This includes using co-constructed "author's checklists" that balance meaning with mechanics and making reflection on the writing process a specific learning outcome.
- Writing as a tool for thinking: Writing should be integrated into wider-curriculum subjects, such as history, science, or geography, to help pupils share and build knowledge rather than just producing a product for assessment.

3. Audience and Social Purpose

- Prioritise authentic audiences: Teachers should move away from "pseudo-authentic" situations and plan projects where there is a real audience receiving the work, such as creating a school magazine, writing letters to local councillors, or producing an anthology for a local library.
- Adopt a socio-rhetorical approach: When teaching genres, always link text features to the specific needs and constraints of real-world contexts. This includes encouraging students to use writing for civic purposes, such as advocating for community issues or interrogating power and bias.

4. Assessment and Feedback

- Develop multi-dimensional rubrics: Assessment systems should be updated to ensure transcriptional accuracy is not the "sole gatekeeper" of success. Rubrics should also reward rhetorical effectiveness, original voice, and identity development.
- Co-construct success criteria: After studying mentor texts, teachers and children should work together to build criteria that judge the impact the writing had on its audience (e.g. clarity of purpose and appropriateness of style) alongside technical correctness.

5. Professional Development

- Increase CPD on diverse writing aspects: Teachers require training on how to source high-quality

mentor texts, identify real-world audiences, and set up disciplinary-based writing projects. This helps practitioners move beyond the "formalist" approach to operationalise sociopolitical and social practice discourses in the classroom.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

Ng, C., & Graham, S. (2025). Teachers' goals for teaching writing to economically disadvantaged students: relations with beliefs and writing instruction. *Reading and Writing*, 1-28.

This study explores the relationships between teachers' beliefs, their goals for teaching writing (GOTWs), and their instructional practices when teaching writing to students from low socioeconomic status (LSES) backgrounds.

- Teachers who hold deficit beliefs about LSES students' cognitive abilities are less likely to adopt mastery goals, and more likely to adopt ability-avoidance and work-avoidance goals.
- Teachers who believe that basic writing instruction is more suitable for LSES students are also less likely to adopt mastery goals, and more likely to adopt ability-avoidance and work-avoidance goals.
- Teachers with strong mastery goals tend to teach advanced writing skills more frequently and basic writing skills less frequently.
- Teachers with work-avoidance goals tend to teach basic writing skills more frequently and advanced writing skills less frequently.

Teachers adopt different goal profiles**. The study identified three distinct groups of teachers based on their GOTWs:

- **Mastery-driven teachers:** These teachers have strong mastery goals and moderate ability-approach goals, prioritise advanced writing skills, believe in LSES students' cognitive abilities, and invest more time in writing instruction.
- **Moderate-goal teachers:** These teachers have average scores across all goal categories, but show stronger avoidance goals. They tend towards teaching basic writing skills and spend less time on writing instruction compared to mastery-driven teachers.
- **Performance-driven teachers:** These teachers have strong ability-approach, ability-avoidance, and work-avoidance goals, and prioritise basic writing skills, hold negative beliefs about LSES students' cognitive abilities, and invest less time in writing instruction.

The research indicates that mastery-driven teachers adopt a more equitable approach to teaching writing, addressing both advanced and basic writing skills, in contrast to teachers with performance or avoidance-based goals. Teacher training should focus on addressing negative beliefs about LSES students' cognitive abilities, as these beliefs influence their GOTWs and instructional practices. Encouraging teachers to adopt mastery goals can lead to a more balanced approach to writing instruction, including both basic and advanced skills. Factors such as government policies emphasising basic writing skills can influence teachers' goals and practices, so these external pressures should be considered.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of teachers' beliefs and goals in shaping their instructional practices for teaching writing to LSES students. The research suggests that focusing on mastery goals and addressing negative beliefs about students' abilities can lead to more equitable and effective writing instruction.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

McDonald, R. (2025). Exploring teachers' positioning of children as writers. *English in Education*, 1-16.

This research article investigates how primary school teachers' personal beliefs and instructional methods shape their pupils' perceptions of writing. Drawing on established writing discourse theories, the author examines three distinct classroom settings in Southeast England to identify how pedagogical choices influence student engagement. The study reveals that teachers who focus on technical skills and curriculum compliance often lead children to view writing as a performative exercise in accuracy. Conversely, educators who prioritise creativity and social practices develop a classroom environment where students feel more autonomous and imaginatively invested in their writing. Ultimately, the paper advocates for a balanced teaching approach that harmonises essential technical proficiency with the emotional and expressive freedom necessary for authentic authorship. The following list outlines the key implications for practice in the teaching of writing:

- **Adopt Integrated Pedagogical Approaches:** There is an urgent need for teachers to move beyond singular discourses of writing (such as a purely skills-based focus) and instead balance technical proficiency with creative freedom.
- **Support Pupil Autonomy and Imagination:** Practices should aim to position children as thinkers and

creators rather than just performers of technical tasks. Providing space for imaginative engagement allows pupils to demonstrate greater autonomy and a deeper personal relationship with their writing.

- **Move Beyond Decontextualised Tasks:** While technical proficiency is important, instruction should avoid teaching grammar, punctuation, and spelling through discrete, decontextualised tasks. Instead, these elements should be carefully embedded within meaningful and contextualised learning experiences.
- **Prioritise Purpose and Social Context:** Writing should be facilitated as purpose-driven communication where the writer considers the social, cultural, and material realities of an actual audience. This invites teachers to create authentic writing events within a "community of practice".
- **Honour Children's Voices and Experiences:** Teachers are encouraged to adopt pedagogies that value pupils' emotions, personal connections, and lived experiences. When meaning and feeling take precedence over "performative correctness", pupils are more likely to view writing as an art form rather than a chore.
- **Encourage Collaborative Knowledge Construction:** Classroom cultures should be built on collaborative learning where teachers and children co-construct meaning. Taking inspiration from peers and sharing ideas helps situating writing within a supportive community.
- **Mitigate the Impact of Compliance Discourses:** Teachers should remain mindful of how highly prescriptive frameworks and "success criteria" can lead to a compliance discourse, where pupils write primarily to "tick boxes" or "impress" the teacher. Over-reliance on these methods can result in pupils finding writing "boring" and performative.
- **Empower Teacher Professional Autonomy:** The research suggests that for writing to be more than the fulfilment of predetermined criteria, teachers must be trusted and empowered to move beyond external mandates and prescriptive teaching models when necessary.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; presentational skills orientation; self-expressionist naturalistic orientation; environmental communicative orientation

Deane, P. (2018). The challenges of writing in school: Conceptualizing writing development within a sociocognitive framework. *Educational Psychologist*, 53(4), 280–300.

This academic article explores the sociocognitive challenges of writing in schools by comparing classroom tasks to professional standards. The author argues that school environments often rely on knowledge-telling strategies, which prioritise speed and simple recall over the deep revision and peer review found in expert communities. This reliance on basic fluency can disadvantage students who lack significant prior knowledge or transcription skills, potentially widening achievement gaps across different social groups. Deane suggests that while strategy instruction like SRSD is beneficial, it requires a high level of metacognitive awareness that not all students are equally prepared to develop. Ultimately, the source advocates for a reconceptualisation of writing instruction that better aligns classroom practices with the complex social and cognitive demands of adult literacy.

- **Reconceptualise school writing tasks:** Educators should move beyond "knowledge-telling" tasks, where the teacher is the sole audience, and instead focus on the sociocultural context that naturally motivates specific writing practices and strategies.
- **Implement an extended writing process:** Move away from purely on-demand tasks by providing time for a full process-writing approach, which includes initial inquiry, multiple drafts, evaluation, and revision.
- **Provide authentic purposes and audiences:** Student writing improves when tasks have real audiences and authentic purposes, simulating the social features of effective writing communities outside of school.
- **Build fundamental literacy and transcription skills:** To help struggling writers, instruction should include interventions that improve handwriting, spelling, and keyboarding, as well as the use of digital tools to increase overall writing fluency.
- **Set clear goals and provide models:** Writing performance is enhanced when teachers set clear achievement goals and provide concrete examples of what successful work looks like.
- **Integrate strategy instruction with metacognitive support:** While strategy instruction (such as Self-Regulated Strategy Development) is effective, it must be paired with explicit teaching of the metacognitive skills required to understand and apply those strategies organically rather than mechanically.
- **Promote collaborative review and feedback:** Encourage collaborative writing and peer review focused on the quality of work, but ensure students are trained in these processes to avoid negative social consequences or ineffective evaluation.
- **Address sociolinguistic and digital divides:** Practice must account for the cognitive burden placed on students who use non-standard dialects or have less access to digital technology, ensuring these factors do not unfairly penalise their writing performance.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: read, share think and talk about writing; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; teach the writing processes; balance composition and transcription; handwriting instruction; spelling instruction; set

Bingham GE & Gerde HK (2023) Early childhood teachers' writing beliefs and practices. *Front. Psychol.* 14:1236652.doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1236652

This study delves into the early writing beliefs, ideas, and practices of 54 early childhood teachers. Through a survey and written responses, teachers shared their beliefs and definitions regarding early writing development. Classroom observations focused on instructional strategies—such as modelling and scaffolding—and the specific early writing skills emphasised during these interactions. Notably, teachers' definitions of writing often emphasised specific skills, with a predominant focus on handwriting.

While teachers employed a range of modelling and scaffolding practices to support early writing, the majority of interactions centred around handwriting support. Interestingly, there was a disconnect between teachers' definitions of writing and their responses to the belief survey. However, these definitions were differentially related to the writing skills emphasised during interactions with children. Teachers who identified multiple writing components in their definition were more likely to support children's writing concept knowledge, while those with more developmentally appropriate beliefs engaged children in spelling-focused interactions.

The findings highlight the complexity of teachers' beliefs about early writing and suggest implications for professional learning support for preschool teachers. This study contributes valuable insights to the understanding of the interplay between teachers' beliefs, definitions, and instructional practices in the context of early writing education.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental and community orientation; genre approach; presentational-skills approach; handwriting; spelling; encoding

Sturk, E., Randahl, A.-C., & Olin-Scheller, C. (2020). Back to basics? Discourses of writing in Facebook groups for teachers. *Nordic Journal of Literacy Research*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.23865/njlr.v6.2005>

This study delves into the prevailing discourses shaping teachers' beliefs about writing education and explores how these discourses are negotiated within the realm of social media. The empirical data, derived from a stratified random sample of interactions in three sizable Facebook groups catering to Swedish teachers (2,500–10,000 members each), offers valuable insights into the dynamics of these discussions. Using Ivanić's framework of the 7 discourses of writing and learning to write, the study meticulously analyses the visible discourses about writing within the interactions, as well as the blogs, school books, and apps recommended by teachers.

With 40% of the interactions focusing on writing, a clear dominance of a skills discourse emerges. Notably, a genre discourse challenges the once-prominent process discourse, indicating a shifting landscape of beliefs among teachers. Surprisingly, discourses in a social context are found to be rare in these interactions. The findings suggest a potentially narrow perspective on writing education in both policy and practice. According to Ivanić (2004), this narrow view may be a consequence of broader societal trends where the educational system faces scrutiny, and explicit standards for writing take precedence.

This study opens the door to a critical examination of the conditions that could facilitate a broader spectrum of discourses on writing education, especially in educational environments under pressure. Further investigations are warranted to explore how educators can navigate and promote a more diverse discourse on writing in response to the evolving demands of the educational landscape.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental and community orientation; genre approach; presentational-skills approach

Walls, H., & Johnston, M. (2023). Teachers beliefs and practices for the teaching of writing in the New Zealand elementary school: influences on student progress, *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 1-28.

In the present study, the effects of teachers' beliefs and practices about writing pedagogy on students' progress were investigated in the context of the New Zealand primary school system. A total of 626 teachers completed a survey on their beliefs and practices. Principal component analysis of beliefs isolated three dimensions, reflecting valuation of (i) explicit, (ii) socio-cultural and (iii) process-writing approaches.

Analysis of the practices data isolated six dimensions: (i) explicit and structured approaches; (ii) socio-cultural and process writing approaches; (iii) attention to surface features; (iv) advanced writing practices; (v) basic writing practices, and (vi) teacher goal selection.

Next, a sub-sample of 19 survey respondents supplied writing samples from their students, at two time points, allowing for the measurement of progress over time. Associations between teachers' scale locations for reported beliefs and practices, and their students' progress were explored.

Explicit teaching beliefs and practices were positively correlated with progress and socio-cultural practices were negatively correlated with progress. Our findings support the use of explicit methods for the teaching of writing and cast some doubt over the efficacy of constructivist approaches.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental and community orientation; writer's workshop; naturalistic and self-expressionist approach; critical literacy approach; presentational-skills approach

Kissel, B. (2021) Writing the future, *Literacy Today*, 39(2), 37–40

A group of teacher-researchers and professors bucked traditional schooling practices of writing and encouraged their students to compose the way real writers wrote—through a process that was cyclical, recursive, and messy. For many of us who observe young students as writers, we do so in collaboration with teachers who lay the foundation of building relationships with students so they feel comfortable sharing their lives and interests with us as they compose. Children thrived under conditions where:

- Choice was a fundamental value
- They could compose using a process that was recursive rather than linear
- Teachers recognised the important interrelatedness between the writer and the reader and between reading and writing
- Students considered readers when writing by clarifying meaning through revision and seeking clarity when editing
- They could respond to feedback that was offered constructively, carefully, and compassionately

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental and community orientation; writer's workshop; teach the writing processes; agency; writer-identity; the reading/writing connection; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Ryan, M., Barton, G. (2014). 'The spatialized practices of teaching writing in elementary schools: Diverse students shaping discoursal selves'. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 48(3), pp. 303-328.

This paper delves into the realm of teaching writing, examining the challenges faced by educators amid high-stakes testing while endeavouring to respect diverse writing practices in schools. Employing sociospatial theory, a closer examination is conducted on the actual and perceived spaces that influence and are influenced by teachers' approaches to writing in two distinct elementary schools with diverse student populations.

By employing critical discourse analysis on robust data sets, the underlying discourses and power dynamics in these school settings are revealed. The findings underscore that when educators concentrate on instructing both structure and skills while also nurturing identity and voice, students with various linguistic backgrounds can generate impactful and authentic written works.

The paper proposes the concept of establishing "third spaces," where a balance is struck between accountability requirements and the nuanced aspects of writing. These third spaces enable a holistic approach to writing instruction, catering to the needs of students from diverse and multilingual backgrounds. The objective is to empower these students to perceive writing not merely as a task but as a creative and critical means of communication, facilitating their effective participation in society and the knowledge economy.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental and community orientation; multilingualism; funds-of-language; writing-realities; presentational-skills approach

Harris, K. R., & McKeown, D. (2022) Overcoming barriers and paradigm wars: Powerful evidence-based writing instruction, *Theory Into Practice*, 61(4), 429-442

The ability to write is fundamental for learning and achievement across Grades K-12, performance in the workplace, continuing education, college, personal development, and addressing social justice. The majority of our students, however, are not capable writers. We have a body of evidence-based practices (EBPs) and best practices that can make a meaningful difference in writing development for our students. We describe one EBP for writing instruction, the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model of instruction for writing. SRSD

results in meaningful improvements in students' writing across grades 1-12 and can be integrated with best practices, including writers' workshop. We then separate fact from fiction regarding this approach for teaching students to write and to engage in reading for writing. Finally, we address paradigm wars and additional barriers to widespread adoption of SRSD in schools, and how to address these barriers.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation; self-regulation strategy development instruction; writer's workshop; evidence-based practices

Keen, J. (2022) Teaching writing: process, practice and policy, *Changing English*, 29(1), 24-39

This article discusses two schemes for teaching writing in schools. One uses analysis of model texts into techniques and devices then application of these by students to their written compositions and one uses a process approach that includes pre-writing and exploring, drafting, sharing and discussing, revising and celebrating to exploit students' procedural knowledge of language at all levels of description. It argues that the process approach is more effective in facilitating the development of students' writing skills than the analysis-and-application methods currently adopted in secondary schools. It concludes that as the process approach is more effective, it will replace analysis-and-application for teaching writing.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; presentational orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; environmental and community orientation; writing process approach; writing workshop; secondary school teaching; secondary writing

Ivanič, R. (2004) Discourses of writing and learning to write, *Language and Education*, 18(3), 220–245

This paper presents a meta-analysis of theory and research about writing and writing pedagogy, identifying six discourses – configurations of beliefs and practices in relation to the teaching of writing.

It introduces and explains a framework for the analysis of educational data about writing pedagogy in which the connections are drawn across views of language, views of writing, views of learning to write, approaches to the teaching of writing, and approaches to the assessment of writing.

The framework can be used for identifying discourses of writing in data such as policy documents, teaching and learning materials, recordings of pedagogic practice, interviews and focus groups with teachers and learners, and media coverage of literacy education.

The paper also proposes that, while there are tensions and contradictions among these discourses, a comprehensive writing pedagogy might integrate teaching approaches from all six.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation

Hyland, K. (2008) Writing theories and writing pedagogies, *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching*, 4(2), 91–110

This paper explores the main approaches to understanding and teaching writing. Making a broad distinction between theories concerned with texts, with writers and with readers, Hyland shows what each approach offers and neglects and what each means for teachers. The categorisation implies no rigid divisions, and, in fact the three approaches respond to, critique, and draw on each other in a variety of ways. Hyland believes, however, that this offers a useful way of comparing and evaluating the research each approach has produced and the pedagogic practices they have generated.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation

Gardner, P. (2018) Writing and writer identity: the poor relation and the search for voice in 'personal literacy', *Literacy*, 52(1), 11-19

The teaching of writing has been a relatively neglected aspect of research in literacy. Cultural and socio-economic reasons for this are suggested. In addition, teachers often readily acknowledge themselves as readers, but rarely as writers.

Without a solid grasp of compositional processes, teachers are perhaps prone to adopt schemes that promote mechanistic writing approaches, which are reinforced by top-down discourses of literacy. This 'schooling literacy' is often at odds with children's lives and their narratives of social being.

After discussing theories of writing, tensions between 'schooling literacy' and 'personal literacy' are debated. It is suggested that the disjuncture of the two exposes gaps that provide teachers with spaces in which to construct a writing curriculum embedded in children's language and funds of knowledge. The elevation of this 'personal literacy' is viewed as an imperative to enhance children's identities as writers, as well as their engagement with writing.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation

Elbow, P. (2004) Writing First! Putting Writing Before Reading Is An Effective Approach to Teaching And Learning, *Educational Leadership*, 62(2) pp.9-13

The phrase "reading and writing" reflects the implicit assumption that reading comes first and that writing must follow. First graders can "write" all the words they can say, albeit in their own manner and using invented spelling. Encouraging this kind of writing gives children control over letters and texts, giving them an understanding that they need ultimately for reading. The word learning itself tends to promote reading over writing because we often assume learning refers to input, not output, that it's a matter of putting other people's ideas inside us. Writing is more caught up with meaning making, however, and encourages students to break out of their characteristically passive stance in school and in learning.

"Reading tends to imply 'Sit still and pay attention', whereas writing tends to imply 'Get in there and do something.'" It's not the case that putting writing first--output before input--will encourage rampant individualism. Reading and writing are joined, in fact, at the hip. Students will put more care into reading when they have had more of a chance to write.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation; connect reading and writing

Barrs, M. (2019) Teaching bad writing, *English in Education*, 53:1, pp.18-31

This article is a critique of current approaches to the teaching and assessment of writing in schools in the UK. Successive government initiatives, most particularly the latest (impoverished) version of the English curriculum, are seen as having led to a situation in which pupils are taught in a way that does not improve the quality of their writing, and often results in writing which is inflated and unconvincing.

The national curriculum and assessment scheme for writing prioritises form over content; it makes grammatical complexity and ostentatious vocabulary the success criteria for assessment, to the detriment of children's writing and learning, and of teachers' practice.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation

If children are to receive the writing instruction they need and deserve, it is essential that teachers develop a coherent and well-constructed vision for teaching writing. This article provides an example of how such a vision can be created. It is based on three assumptions:

- One, developing a vision for teaching writing should be guided by theory. This provides a framework for thinking about how writing instruction should proceed.
- Two, visions for teaching writing should be informed by the best scientific evidence available. This increases the likelihood that the resulting vision is an effective plan.
- Three, theory and evidence-based writing practices are necessary but not sufficient for developing classroom visions for teaching writing.

Teachers need to bring their own knowledge, gained through experience, to this process. Collectively, these three ingredients make it possible for teachers to make informed, judicious, and intelligent decisions when constructing a vision for teaching writing.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

Steve Graham (2018) A Revised Writer(s)-Within-Community Model of Writing, *Educational Psychologist*, 53:4, 258-279

This article presents a revised version of the writer(s)-within-community model of writing. Writing is conceptualised as a social activity situated within specific writing communities. Writing in these communities is accomplished by its members. The model proposes that writing is simultaneously shaped and bound by the characteristics, capacity, and variability of the communities in which it takes place and by the cognitive characteristics, capacity, and individual differences of those who produce it.

The model further proposes that writing development is a consequence of participation in writing communities and individual changes in writers' capabilities, which interact with biological, neurological, physical, and environmental factors. This newer version of the model places a greater emphasis on communication and the reader. It expands the description of a writing community to include the social, cultural, political, institutional, and historical influences that shape it.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental and community orientation

Hillocks, G., (1986) *Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching* Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills

This book provides a meta-analysis of studies on teaching approaches and focuses on composition instruction at the elementary, secondary, and college levels.

- The first chapter of the book examines general studies of the composing process, studies of process in classrooms, and studies of planning, production factors, revision, and writing apprehension.
- The second chapter explores research on the repertoire of lexical, syntactic, or rhetorical forms which writers call upon in their writing.
- The third chapter examines criticisms of experimental studies and the difficulties in doing them, then explains the techniques used in the meta-analysis of such studies, the selection of studies, and the variables examined.
- The next four chapters analyse the studies in the areas of modes of instruction, grammar and the manipulation of syntax, criteria for better writing, and invention.
- The eighth chapter presents the results of the meta-analysis for the dimensions examined: grade level, duration of treatment, mode of instruction, focus of instruction, revision, and feedback.
- The final chapter discusses the compatibility of results of treatment or method studies with those of processes studies, and offers recommendations for future research.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation

Bereiter, C., Scardamalia, M. (1987) An attainable version of high literacy: Approaches to teaching higher-order skills in reading and writing, *Curriculum Inquiry*, 17(1), 19–30

One way of criticising contemporary literacy education is to credit it with trying to do the right things, but to argue that the means could stand improvement. With great variation in the amount and kind of improvement recommended, this seems to be the line of criticism taken by almost everyone from alarmist critics to blue-ribbon panellists.

A quite different line of criticism, however, attacks the aim of contemporary literacy education, charging it with being oriented toward the development of a low form of literacy. In their historical analysis of literacy instruction, Resnick and Resnick (1977) identify high literacy and low literacy as distinct educational traditions. High literacy has been a tradition in education of the elites in Europe and America. It has been aimed at developing the linguistic and verbal reasoning abilities, the literary standards and sophistication, and the moral values and precepts appropriate to leaders of society. Mass education, however, according to Resnick and Resnick, grew out of a “low literacy” tradition of efforts to promote the minimum levels of reading needed for religious practice.

In this article we shall not consider the merits of the high literacy tradition as it has actually unfolded. Rather, our concern is with what would be required in order to make high literacy of some sort attainable by the majority of students. The answer, we believe, does not lie in trying to make the common school into a copy of the elite academy. Rather, it lies in constructing new models of curriculum and instruction that can bring the benefits of high literacy to students who do not already come from highly literate backgrounds.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation

Mason, J., Giovanelli, M. (2017) ‘What do you think?’ Let me tell you: Discourse about texts and the literature classroom, *Changing English*, 24(3), 318–329

This article examines the practice of studying texts in secondary school English lessons as a particular type of reading experience. Through a critical stylistic analysis of a popular edition of John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*, the article explores how reading the text is framed by educational editions, and how this might present the purpose of studying fiction to students.

The article draws on two cognitive linguistic concepts – figure/ground configuration and narrative schemas – in order to explore how ‘discourse about a text’ can potentially influence how students read and engage with a text.

Building on a previous article, the notion of pre-figuring is developed to offer an account of how a reader’s attention can be directed to particular elements of a text, thus privileging some interpretations and downplaying others.

The article then reflects more widely on the perceived purposes of studying fiction with young people, exploring in particular the recent rise of support within the profession in England for Hirsch’s ‘cultural literacy’ model, which sees knowledge about texts as more valuable than authentic reading and personal response.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; literature-based orientation; naturalistic self-expressionist orientation; environmental and community orientation

Lankshear, C., Knobel, M. (2009) More than words: Chris Searle’s approach to critical literacy as cultural action, *Race & Class*, 51(2), 59–78

This article discusses what seem to us to be some of the key features of Chris Searle’s approach to language and literacy education within school classroom settings in England, as portrayed in his own writings and reflected in work done by his students and published in numerous compilations from *Stepney Words* (1971) to *School of the World* (1994).

We understand his work as a sustained engagement in critical literacy, underpinned by an unswerving belief that being a literacy educator serving working-class communities is inherently a political, ethical and situated – material and grounded – undertaking. Throughout his school teaching life, Chris Searle took it as axiomatic that working-class children should learn to read, write, spell, punctuate and develop the word as a tool to be used in struggles – their own and those of people like them, wherever they may live – for improvement and liberation.

Literacy education for working-class children must proceed from, maintain continuity with and always be

accountable to the material life trajectories and prospects of these children. It can only do this by maintaining direct contact with their material lives and their situated being within their material worlds.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation

Cazden, C., Cope, B., Fairclough, N., Gee, J. (1992) A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures, *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60–92

In this article, the *New London Group* presents a theoretical overview of the connections between the changing social environment facing students and teachers and a new approach to literacy pedagogy that they call "multiliteracies."

The authors argue that the multiplicity of communications channels and increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the world today call for a much broader view of literacy than portrayed by traditional language-based approaches.

Multiliteracies, according to the authors, overcomes the limitations of traditional approaches by emphasizing how negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society is central to the pragmatics of the working, civic, and private lives of students. The authors maintain that the use of multiliteracies approaches to pedagogy will enable students to achieve the authors' twin goals for literacy learning: creating access to the evolving language of work, power, and community, and fostering the critical engagement necessary for them to design their social futures and achieve success through fulfilling employment.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation

Fishman, S., McCarthy, L. (1992) Is expressivism dead? Reconsidering its romantic roots and its relation to social constructionism, *College English*, 54(6), 647–661

This article defends self-expressivism as a philosophy of composition. The authors present one of their classes as one that is committed both to the mastery of philosophic method and to the development of student voices.

Free access (if read online): [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; presentational orientation; naturalistic self-expression orientation; structuralist and genre-based orientation; literature-based orientation; critical literacy and multiliteracy orientation; environmental and community orientation

Kohnen, A. M., Caprino, K., Crane, S., Townsend, J. S. (2019) Where is the Writing Teacher? Preservice Teachers' Perspectives on the Teaching of Writing, *Writing and Pedagogy*, 11(2), 285–310.

This article identifies how a cohort of preservice teachers educated during the No Child Left Behind Era thought about the teaching of writing when they entered a secondary English Language Arts (ELA) teacher preparation program. Most participants shared the beliefs that:

- Writing was primarily the demonstration of specific skills, often on a standardised test
- Alternatives to the five-paragraph essay would be extra, with formulaic writing central to instruction
- Teachers had little role in student writing development beyond assigning writing
- Feedback on writing should be 'objective' and tied to a grade
- The purpose of English Language Arts is primarily to teach literature.

Authors believe identifying preservice teachers' beliefs about writing and the role of the writing teacher at the beginning of a program can help teacher educators design experiences to expand students' notions of literacy and of writing instruction.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; national writing project; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

This study of 29 teachers from four states in the US investigated teachers' orientations towards writing and the influences on their beliefs.

Through interviews about writing instruction, the researchers found significant differences between teachers in high and low-income schools.

- While teachers in high-income schools valued rhetorical style, developing voice, and reading-writing connections, teachers in low-income schools focused on grammar, mechanics and sentence structure.
- Teachers in high-income schools appear to be exercising more choice in curricular materials and valuing quality of writing beyond grammar and mechanics, whereas teachers in low-income schools are using specific curriculum mandated by the districts.

Influences on teachers' orientations included school context, programs and materials, and assessments. The study raises concerns that students in low-income schools are missing out on authentic, challenging, and meaningful writing opportunities since the focus is on skills-based instruction.

The findings point to the need for teachers to provide all students with opportunities to develop rhetorical style, voice, and reading-writing connections in addition to grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

Graham, S., Harris, K.R., Fink, B., MacArthur, C.A. (2001) Teacher efficacy in writing: A construct validation with primary grade teachers, *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 56, 177–202

Teacher efficacy has been identified as a variable accounting for individual differences in teacher practice and student outcome. Because teacher efficacy is a specific rather than a generalised expectancy, an examination was done on the validity and reliability of a teacher efficacy instrument designed specifically for the area of writing. Consistent with previous teacher efficacy research, a factor analysis of the instrument yielded two dimensions: measuring personal teaching efficacy and the other general teaching efficacy. Both factors were reliable and only slightly correlated with each other. The reported classroom practises of high- and low-efficacy teachers differed, providing further support for the validity of the instrument. It was also found that variation in efficacy scores was related to teachers' beliefs about how to teach writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; national writing project; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; teacher self-efficacy

Smith, L. (2019) 'We're not building worker bees.' What has happened to creative practice in England since the Dartmouth conference of 1966? *Changing English*, 26(1), 48–62

It is now five years since the introduction of the current National Curriculum for English in England; it is just over 50 years since the Dartmouth Conference drew together American and English educationalists.

This paper reports on a hermeneutic study that presents voices from the field of English teaching in England. It asks questions of today's statutory instruments in the light of approaches highlighted at Dartmouth, with a focus on writing. It illustrates the challenges faced by English teachers from an examination-focused system, but suggests that ultimately the tradition exemplified by Dartmouth, which promotes creative pedagogies and the potential of writing to develop students' personal and social growth, survives. It concludes that it is important to promote creative approaches in English classrooms of today and education policy of tomorrow.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

McCarthey, S., Woodard, R., Kang, G. (2014) Elementary teachers negotiating discourses in writing instruction, *Written Communication*, 31(1), 58–90

This study examined 20 elementary school teachers and their beliefs about writing, their instructional practices, and contextual factors. While the district-adopted curriculum reflected specific discourses, teachers' beliefs and practices reflected a combination of discourses. The nature of the professional development

tended to reinforce particular discourses, but occasionally offered an alternative. The three cases revealed how teachers negotiated the tensions among various discourses.

- Beth exemplified a skills discourse, but demonstrated beliefs about writing as communication; however, she did not articulate tensions between the discourses and followed the district skills-infused curriculum.
- Amber borrowed from skills, traits, process, and genre discourses without resolving potential contradictions, resulting in instructional practices that had little coherence.
- Jackson, who brought in his own writing as a hip-hop artist, illustrated the social practices discourse as well as creativity and genre discourses to create an enhanced version of a district-adopted curriculum.

Implications for practice include raising teacher's awareness of the contradictory discourses that surround them.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

Gaitas, S., Martins, M. (2015) Relationships between primary teachers' beliefs and their practices in relation to writing instruction, *Research Papers in Education*, 30(4), 492–505

Teachers' beliefs are directly connected to their practices and have an impact on students' educational experiences and results. The aim of this study was to describe and examine the relationship between beliefs and practices linked to teaching students to write in the first four years of primary school.

- The analysis of teachers' beliefs revealed two different factors: (1) code-based beliefs and (2) meaning-based beliefs.
- The analysis of teachers' classroom organisation revealed three different factors: (1) pairs or small groups; (2) individual; and (3) whole classroom.

Most of the participating teachers emphasised both explicit teaching and informal learning methods. There were significant associations between beliefs and activities and beliefs and classroom organisation procedures supported by code vs. meaning beliefs. However, the different associations revealed in the study showed that teachers combine multidimensional aspects in their writing instruction theory and practice.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

Zoellner, R. (1969) Talk-write: A behavioural pedagogy for composition, *College English*, 30(4), 267–320

In this article, Zoellner contends that the "think-write" pedagogy has failed students because it demands that students internalise the rules of some abstract concept about what constitutes good writing, and causes them to write words for the teacher instead of for themselves.

Zoellner bases his talk-write pedagogy upon the concept of modality and of intermodal transfer to explain how the reinforcement of one behaviour or skill improves the performance of another. Writing should improve talk, and talk should improve writing. In the talk-write pedagogy, the teacher and student engage in a rapid exchange of vocal to scribal dialogue that allows the teacher to immediately reinforce successive and closer approximations to some desired behaviour. Zoellner's dialogic pedagogy helps the student to create a unique voice and address real readers.

Free access (if read online): [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

Watkins, M. (1999) Policing the text: Structuralism's stranglehold on Australian language and literacy pedagogy, *Language and Education*, 13(2), 118–132

Language and literacy pedagogy is a hotly contested site. Various theoretical perspectives jostle for dominance with the needs of teachers and students very often given little consideration within the debate.

In Australia, 'structuralist' approaches to text, in particular those based on systemic functional theory, are clearly in the ascendancy. Their dominance is evident in syllabus documents and curriculum material across Australia. While this move has led to a more explicit teaching of literacy than was the case during the 1970s and 1980s when more naturalistic methodologies prevailed, the structuralist notion of text which frames these

approaches is having a marked effect on classroom practice. Text is generally understood as type, a taxonomic conglomerate of formulaic stages. In teaching text as such teachers problematically assume the role of 'textual police' ensuring students understand and reproduce these textual 'rules'.

This paper is based upon a recent study of the implementation of such an approach to text in primary school classrooms. It examines the pedagogic practice of one teacher, highlighting the impact of a restrictive and reductive approach to text on her teaching methodology.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; genre theory; genre study

Street, C. (2003) Pre-service teachers' attitudes about writing and learning to teach writing: Implications for teacher educators, *Teacher Education Quarterly Summer*, 30, 33–50

The relationship between attitude and the practice of teaching writing among preservice teachers is an important consideration for a number of reasons. Perhaps most significantly, these students will soon be responsible for teaching writing in schools where superior writing instruction is needed. Research clearly demonstrates the important relationship between teachers' attitudes about writing and their performance in the classroom, research that explores where writing attitudes originate and how they influence practice are also worthy of attention. Therefore, in this study, Street asks the following questions:

1. What attitudes did pre-service teachers hold regarding writing and the teaching of writing when they entered their final semester of pre-service professional education?
2. What were the major influences on these attitudes?
3. What was the relationship between the participants' writing attitudes and the teaching process they actually employed during student teaching?

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; preservice teachers

Schultz, K., Fecho, B. (2000) Society's child: Social context and writing development, *Educational Psychologist*, 35(1), 51–62

This article draws from discussions that have been taking place over the last 20 years concerning the interplay of social contextual research and theory and knowledge about writing development. Beginning with a survey of these academic discussions and then detailing what this theory suggests through an examination of the academic literature and classroom examples, the article suggests that writing development is:

- Reflective of social historical contexts
- Variable across local contexts
- Reflective of classroom curriculum and pedagogy
- Shaped by social interactions
- Tied to social identities
- Conceptualised as a nonlinear process.

It then argues that a social contextual stance on writing development shifts perspective not away from the individual writer and the individual product, but toward seeing that writer and text in multiple contexts that complicate our understanding of the writing process.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental community orientation

Perry, K. (2012) What is literacy? A critical overview of sociocultural perspectives *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 8(1), 50–71

Sociocultural perspectives on literacy include various theories focused on the myriad ways in which people use literacy in context, which include a strong emphasis on power relations. Yet, these theories also have important differences, and many in the field of literacy do not clearly differentiate among them. I provide a critical overview of influential sociocultural perspectives on literacy, focusing on three major perspectives:

- Literacy as social practice
- Multiliteracies

- Critical literacy

In an effort to support researchers in framing their scholarly work and to support practitioners and other consumers of research make sense of research, I discuss the ways in which each theory would answer the question, "What is literacy?" as well as the affordances and limitations of these theories in terms of literacy development, literacy use, and literacy instruction.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental community orientation; critical literacy; multiliteracies

Nystrand, M. (1989) A social interactive model of writing, *Written Communication*, 6, 66–85

In this decade, writing researchers have shown increasing interest in the social aspects of written communication. This interest has largely been stimulated by interest in writing-across-the-curriculum programs and dialogue journal keeping, as well as such pressing issues as the relationships of process to text and to the social contexts of writing, and the problem of genre. This article outlines a social-interactive model of written communication, highlighting the writer's role in negotiations with readers in the medium of text. Formalist theories of text meaning (meaning is in the text) and idealist theories of meaning (meaning in the reader) are reviewed and challenged.

In social-interactive theories of discourse, which are proposed as an alternative to formalist and idealist theories, meaning is said to be a social construct negotiated by writer and reader through the medium of text, which uniquely configures their respective purposes. In the process of communicating, writers and readers may be said to make various "moves," which achieve progressive and sequential "states" of understanding between them. Writers make three essential kinds of moves: They (1) initiate and (2) sustain written discourse, which they accomplish by means of (3) text elaboration. The rules for writers' moves are spelled out in a fundamental axiom and seven corollaries.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental community orientation; genre theory; genre study; process writing

Murray, D. (1978) Write before writing, *College Composition and Communication*, 29(4), 375–381

We command our students to write and grow frustrated when our 'bad' students hesitate, stare out the window, dawdle over blank paper, give up and say, 'I can't write,' while other 'good' students smugly pass their papers in before the end of the period. When publishing writers visit such classrooms, however, they are astonished at students who can write on command, ejaculating correct little essays without thought, for writers have to write before writing. The writers were the students who dawdled, stared out windows, and, more often than we like to admit, didn't do well in English—or in school. One reason may be that few teachers have ever allowed adequate time for prewriting, that essential stage in the writing process which precedes a completed first draft. And even the curricula plans and textbooks which attempt to deal with prewriting usually pass over it rather quickly, referring only to the techniques of outlining, note-taking, or journal-making, not revealing the complicated process writers work through to get to the first draft. Writing teachers, however, should give careful attention to what happens between the moment the writer receives an idea or an assignment and the moment the first completed draft is begun.

Free access (if read online): [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; environmental community orientation; process writing

Merchant, G. (2009) Web 2.0, new literacies, and the idea of learning through participation, *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 8(3), 107–122

In this paper Guy Merchant identifies some current elaborations on the theme of participation and digital literacy in order to open further debate on the relationship between interaction, collaboration, and learning in online environments. Motivated by an interest in using new technologies in the context of formal learning, Merchant draws on in-school and out-of-school work in Web 2.0 spaces. This work is influenced by the new literacies approach, and here I provide an overview of the ways in which learning through participation is characterised by those adopting this and other related perspectives. I include a critical examination of the idea of 'participatory' culture as articulated in the field of media studies, focusing particularly on the influential work of Jenkins (2006a; 2006b). In order to draw these threads together around conceptualizations of learning, I summarise ways in which participation is described in the literature on socially-situated cognition. This is

used to generate some tentative suggestions about how learning and literacy in Web 2.0 spaces might be envisioned and how ideas about participation might inform curriculum planning and design

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; critical literacy; multiliteracies; new literacies; digital literacy

McGuinn, N. (2005) A place for the personal voice? Gunther Kress and the English curriculum, *Changing English*, 12(2), 205–217

For more than 20 years, Gunther Kress has made a powerful contribution to the debate about the English curriculum. *The National Literacy Strategy* represented an official endorsement of his ideas, particularly concerning the explicit teaching of 'non-fictional' genres.

In this sense, Kress's work exerts a significant influence upon the pedagogy and practice of the contemporary English classroom. Interestingly, however, research suggests that many practitioners still feel committed to earlier, deep-rooted traditions which place personal engagement with literature at the heart of the English curriculum—a theoretical position which Kress has done much to critique.

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Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; genre theory; genre study; literature-based orientation; connecting reading and writing; naturalistic self-expressionist orientation

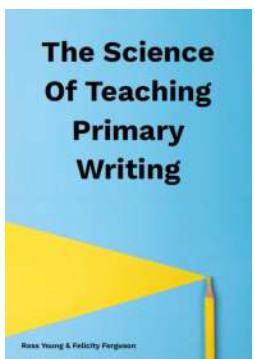
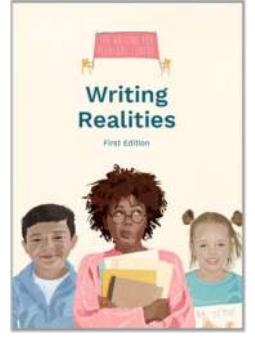
Theriot, S., Tice, K. (2008) Teachers' knowledge development and change: Untangling beliefs and practices, *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 48(1), 65–75

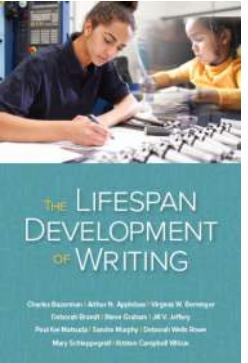
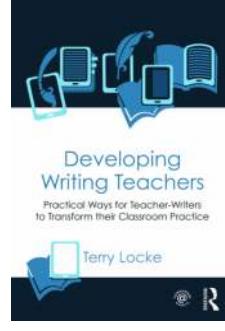
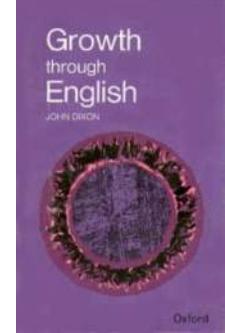
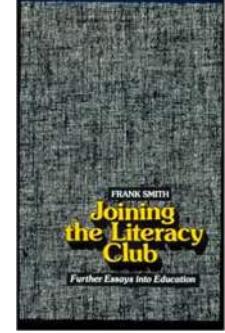
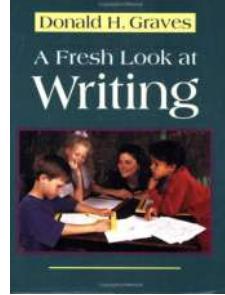
Through a case-study approach, the authors focus on understanding the complexity of teachers' knowledge development, particularly as it pertains to teachers' beliefs about literacy development and their teaching practices in literacy. The case study of a teacher is presented to illustrate factors that can play a role as teachers strive to incorporate instruction compatible with their beliefs, thereby having implications for the professional development of teachers.

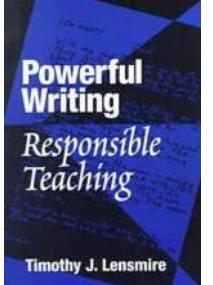
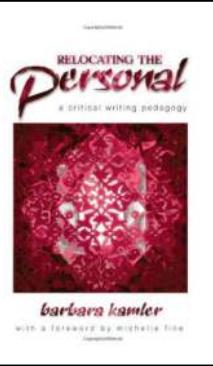
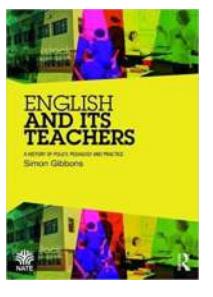
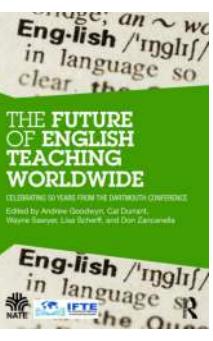
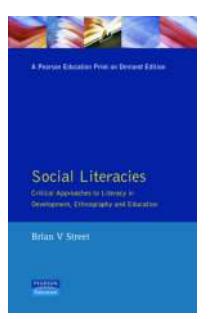
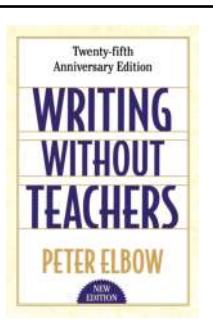
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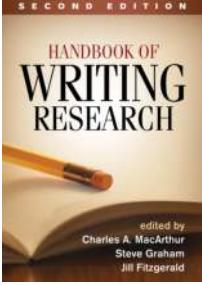
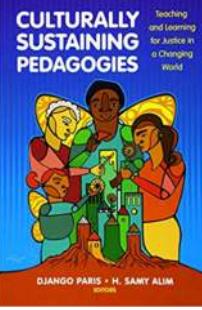
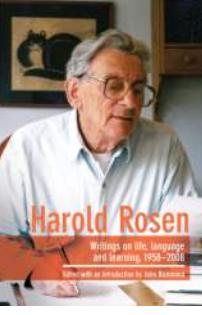
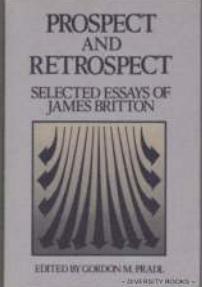
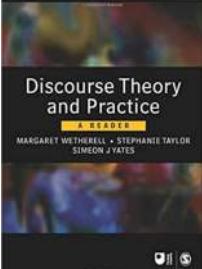
Tags: teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge

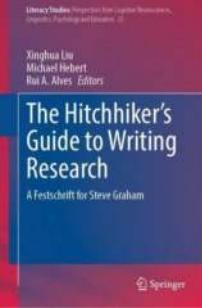
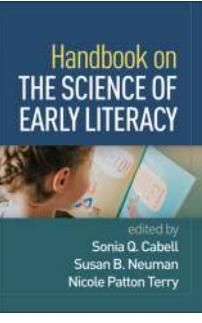
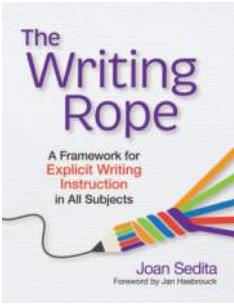
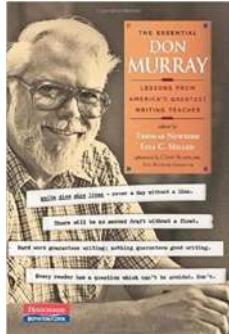
Recommended chapters and literature

	Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2022) <i>The Science Of Teaching Primary Writing</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]
	Young, R., Ferguson, F., Kaufman, D., Govender, N. (2022) <i>Writing Realities</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]

	<p>Bazerman, C., Applebee, A., Berninger, V., Brandt, D., Graham, S., Jeffery, J., Matsuda, P. K., Murphy, S., Rowe, D. W., Schleppegrell, M., Wilcox, K. C. (2018) <i>The Lifespan Development Of Writing</i> Illinois: NCTE [LINK]</p>
	<p>Locke, T. (2015) <i>Developing Writing Teachers</i> London: Routledge.</p>
	<p>Dixon, J. (1967) <i>Growth in English</i> London: Oxford University Press</p>
	<p>Smith, F. (1988) <i>Joining the Literacy Club</i> Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann</p>
	<p>Graves, D. (1994) <i>A Fresh Look At Writing</i> Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann</p>

	<p>Lensmire, T. (2000) <i>Powerful Writing Responsible Teaching</i> New York:Teachers' College Press</p>
	<p>Kamler, B. (2001) <i>Relocating the Personal: A Critical Writing Pedagogy</i> Albany: State University Press of New York</p>
	<p>Gibbons, S. (2017) <i>English And Its Teachers</i> London: Routledge</p>
	<p>Durrant, C., Sawyer, W., Scherff, L., Goodwyn, A. (2019) <i>The Future of English Teaching Worldwide</i> London: Routledge</p>
	<p>Street, B. (1995) <i>Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography & Education</i> London: Routledge</p>
	<p>Elbow, P. (1998) <i>Writing Without Teachers</i> Oxford: Oxford University Press</p>

	<p>MacArthur, C., and Graham, S. (2017) <i>Writing research from a cognitive perspective</i>, Handbook of Writing Research, MacArthur, C., Graham, S., and Fitzgerald, J. (Ed.) (2nd Ed.) (pp. 24–40). London: Guildford Press</p>
	<p>Kinloch, V. (2017) 'You ain't making me write': Culturally sustaining pedagogies and black youths' performance of resistance, <i>Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies</i>, Paris, D., and Alim, S. (Eds.) (pp. 25–42). New York: Teachers' College Press</p>
	<p>Rosen, H. (2017) The politics of writing, <i>Harold Rosen Writings on Life, Language and Learning 1958–2008</i>, Richmond, J. (Ed.) (pp. 347–361). London: UCL IOE Press</p>
	<p>Britton, J. (1972) Writing to learn and learning to write, <i>Prospect and Retrospect: Selected Essays Of James Britton</i>, Pradl, G. (Ed.) (pp. 94–112). London: Heinemann</p>
	<p>Maybin, J. (2001) Language, struggle and voice: The bakhtin/volosinov writings, <i>Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader</i>, Wetherell, M., Taylor, S., and Yates, S. (Eds.) (pp. 64–71) London: Sage</p>
	<p>Rose, D. (2008) Writing as linguistic mastery: The development of genre-based literacy pedagogy, <i>Handbook of Writing Development</i>, Myhill, D., Beard, R., Nystrand, M., and Riley, J. (Eds.) London: Sage</p>

	<p>Liu, X., Hebert, M., & Alves, R. A. (Eds.). (2023). <i>The Hitchhiker's Guide to Writing Research: A Festschrift for Steve Graham</i> (Vol. 25). Springer Nature.</p>
	<p>Cabell, S. Q., Neuman, S. B., & Terry, N. P. (Eds.). (2023). <i>Handbook on the Science of Early Literacy</i>. Guilford Press</p>
	<p>Sedita, J. (2022). <i>The Writing Rope</i>. Brookes Publishing</p>
	<p>Murray, D. M. (2009). <i>The essential Don Murray: Lessons from America's greatest writing teacher</i>. Boynton/Cook Publishers/Heinemann.</p>

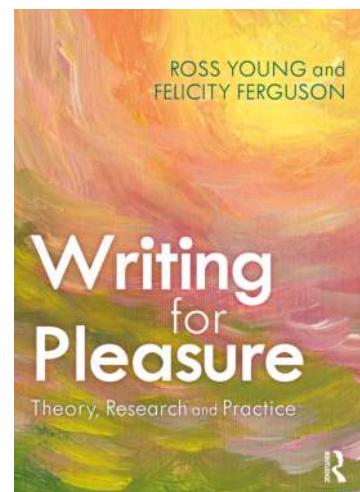
Chapter 2

Initial Teacher Education: Developing Teachers Of Writing

Introduction

This chapter begins by considering historical and current barriers to delivering world-class writing teaching and proposes an action plan to help stakeholders address these systemic issues. The plan includes raising the profile of writing; getting the nation writing; making the nation knowledgeable about writing; raising the profile of children's writing and increasing policymakers' understanding of writing and writers. The authors then discuss teachers' largely negative writing beliefs, writer identities, and lack of confidence in teaching writing. They consider the potential of The National Writing Project, school-based writing groups, increasing teachers' subject knowledge, and how to share the pedagogical knowledge required to grow whole schools of extraordinary writers. They examine the role of literacy associations and charities in the pursuit of world-class writing teaching. Initial teacher education is also reviewed.

The penultimate section considers research-informed continued professional development and how providers need to move towards establishing professional learning communities and long-term CPD support. The importance of promoting teachers as internal specialists and action researchers is also explored. Finally, the authors look forward to a potentially bright future for writing and the development of young writers who write with purpose, precision, pleasure, and power.



[DOWNLOAD CHAPTER](#)

Walters, A. (2025) 'Something I've carried with me': Visibility and vulnerability within the writing journeys of preservice secondary English teachers. *Literacy*, 59: 8–20.

This research article investigates how the personal writing histories of secondary English student teachers influence their professional identities and classroom practices. Through interpretative phenomenological analysis, the study reveals that many educators carry long-standing vulnerabilities rooted in negative childhood experiences with assessment and feedback. These historical wounds often lead to a disconnection from writing, causing teachers to feel exposed or inadequate when required to model the craft for their own students. The text highlights a tension between assessment-driven pedagogies, which treat writing as a formulaic product, and the emotional courage required to engage in writing as a creative process. Ultimately, the author suggests that using visual metaphors like "writing rivers" can help teachers reflect on these anxieties to develop more empathetic instructional environments. Providing a safe space for vulnerability in the classroom is presented as essential for repairing the identities of both teachers and their pupils.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Raskauskas, J., Kline, S.M., Wall, A., Kang, G.Y., Ikpeze, C.H., Myers, J., & Tracy, K. (2022). "I think writing is..." A multi-state study of teacher candidates' changing beliefs about writing. *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, 11(3), 3.

This academic study investigates how teacher candidates' perspectives on writing evolve after completing a university literacy course. Researchers across six American institutions found that while most students began with narrow, school-based definitions of writing, many eventually shifted towards viewing it as a social and personal practice. These changes included a greater focus on audience engagement and the development of individual writerly identities rather than just focusing on technical accuracy. However, the authors note that ingrained beliefs about standardised testing and "correct" grammar remain difficult to disrupt. Ultimately, the text advocates for teacher education that challenges linguistic hierarchies and promotes humanising pedagogy to support social justice in the classroom.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Young, M. K., & Gillespie Rouse, A. (2025). "Writing with them, not for them": Examining teacher candidates' pedagogical reasoning during and after simulated elementary writing conferences. *Reading and Writing*, 1-23.

This research paper investigates how mixed-reality simulations assist teacher candidates in developing the skills necessary to conduct effective elementary writing conferences. By interacting with digital student avatars, participants encountered pedagogical dilemmas such as balancing student engagement with classroom management and merging planned lessons with spontaneous instructional moments.

The study highlights that these low-stakes rehearsals allow novice educators to practice pedagogical reasoning and decision-making in a controlled environment. Qualitative findings suggest that simulations successfully mirror the complexities of real classrooms, helping teachers learn to scaffold student agency while maintaining focus on specific writing goals. Ultimately, the authors argue that integrating simulation technology into teacher preparation provides vital opportunities for professional growth that traditional fieldwork may lack.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers; formative assessment; pupil conferencing; verbal feedback

Rutt Williams, S., Qu, P., & Denning, L. (2025). Beyond the Red Pen: Investigating the Formation of Reader and Writer Identity Development in Preservice Teachers. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 64(3), 5.

This article examines how preservice teachers develop their professional identities through a Professional Learning Community (PLC). The researchers utilised Epistemological Identity Theory to structure an English Education course, encouraging students to re-engage with reading and writing for pleasure rather than just academic necessity. By participating in collaborative book clubs and shared reflections, the students began to bridge the gap between their roles as learners and future educators.

The findings suggest that when student teachers cultivate their own identities as readers and writers, they become more confident and intentional in their pedagogical approaches. Ultimately, the text highlights that social interaction and authentic literacy experiences are essential for preparing teachers to inspire similar passions in their future pupils.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Rouse, A. G., Young, M. K., & Gifford, D. (2023). Exploring relationships between pre-service teachers' self-efficacy for writing and instruction provided in simulated elementary writing conferences. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14.

Practice-based opportunities, like teaching simulations, are becoming more prevalent in teacher preparation programs. We sought to examine the instructional moves of 5 pre-service teachers during a simulated elementary writing conference using Mursion technology, a mixed-reality simulation (MRS) that emulates a classroom environment with student avatars. We examined both participants' self-efficacy and their instructional moves during MRS writing conferences. To better understand pre-service teachers' learning, we also examined reflections they wrote about their MRS experience.

Results showed that pre-service teachers spent much of their time (31.7%) managing the environment (e.g., setting expectations, addressing student behaviour) during MRS writing conferences, followed by nearly one-fourth of their time (24.2%) instructing students on their writing pieces (e.g., adding details, revising, editing), with high levels of teacher talk compared to student talk. Participants' self-efficacy for writing, for teaching writing elements, and for writing instruction were not clearly related to their instructional moves during the MRS experience. However, participants' reflections suggest that pre-service teachers felt the experience gave them the opportunity to practise making in-the-moment decisions and learn from their peers in a way that may allow them to have a more accurate understanding of their abilities to teach writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher

Gardner, P., & Kuzich, S. (2023). Student teachers as writers: using an 'immersive' approach in ITE to build positive writers. *Literacy*.

The preparation of student teachers to be effective teachers of writing requires attention to both their writing skills and their personal confidence. When teachers have confidence in themselves as writers and strong writer identities, they are likely to be better placed to develop strong writer identities in their own students. It is suggested confidence and secure writer identity contribute to high self-efficacy.

However, studies suggest student teachers often lack confidence as writers. Improving the quality of school students' writing may depend on producing more teacher graduates with high levels of confidence and self-efficacy, as writers. This investigation with Year One Primary B. Ed students adopted an immersive approach to the study and development of writing.

Student teachers engaged in a series of open-ended writing prompts and were asked to reflect on their experiences and confidence as writers. Findings suggest an 'immersive approach' may enable many student teachers to develop greater confidence and positivity towards writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers; community and environmental orientation; writer-identity; writing realities

Machado, E., Beneke, M. R., & Taitingfong, J. (2023). "Rise Up, Hand in Hand": Early Childhood Teachers Writing a Liberatory Literacy Pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 0(0).

<https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312231157661>

Although writing is often used for personal reflection in teacher education, it is less commonly leveraged to imagine educational futures (Gilligan, 2020)—particularly those centred on collective liberation. Amid intersecting social crises, however, imagining futures is critically important (Ladson-Billings, 2021), and writing is a crucial step toward bringing them into the present. In this participatory case study (Reilly, 2010), we explored the future-oriented writing practices of five early childhood teachers in an inquiry group. Drawing on critical literacy (Vasquez et al., 2019) and prolepsis (Cole, 1993), we describe how collaborative, creative, and pedagogical writing supported them in envisioning, enacting, and leading liberatory literacy pedagogies within and beyond their schools. Findings contribute to literature in teacher education, early childhood education, and literacy.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers; community and environmental orientation; writer-identity; writing realities

Colognesi, S., Deramaux, M., Lucchini, S., & Coertjens, L. (2023). Effects of Research-Based Teacher Training on Writing Instruction Practices. In Development of Writing Skills In *Children in Diverse Cultural Contexts: Contributions to Teaching and Learning* (pp. 373-392). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

We explored whether training through and about research on effective writing practices would enable teachers to use these practices fully in their classrooms. To do this, we followed seven teachers who had participated in research on the teaching of writing. They had between 6 and 15 years of experience. Five of them teach at primary level and two at secondary level. They were trained in a program involving effective practices. They adapted the practices for their class with the referent researcher, implemented them in the classroom, and participated in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data. This work took place over a year.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted at least 1 year after this experience, to find out the effects of this training-research program. In the end, it appears that the participants in training and research had a desire to change their practices as a result of this experience. All of the seven teachers interviewed felt that they implemented rewrites, feedback, and scaffolding and were attentive to students' relationship to writing. In addition, six of the seven teachers added peer evaluation and eliciting student metacognition. However, they specified that these practices were the most complex for them to implement, especially the metacognitive prompts.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers; pedagogical knowledge

Kimble, J. (2022) "Criticism, Praise, and the Red Pen: The Role of Elementary School Teachers on the Enduring Efficacy of Writing Instructors," *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, Vol. 11 (3)

A teacher's own early experiences with writing, whether positive or negative, have a significant effect on the students that they teach, especially those who go on to become teachers. In a graduate education and reading program at a public university in the southern United States, we ask our teachers through a writing biography assignment to explore these memories of their earliest writing experiences and determine how those experiences fit into their current teaching careers. For this qualitative project, the researcher analysed essays that were submitted for a "Writing Autobiography" assignment for this graduate level writing class for educators. This study established that these teachers' early experiences with writing significantly affected their efficacy in writing and in teaching writing to their current students.

In some cases, the participants were young enough to still be learning handwriting when feelings of writing inadequacies were established through teacher criticism. While middle and high school also were listed as turning points in writing efficacy for these participants, the most common climatic moment for the participants—for better or worse—occurred in third, fourth, or fifth grades. Mentors, both teachers and family members, contributed to the recovery from early negative writing experiences in school. Qualitative findings support the importance of positive writing experiences in elementary school.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; subject knowledge; pedagogical knowledge; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; handwriting; feedback; pupil-conferencing; verbal feedback; written feedback

Gardner, P. (2022) Ready to write? Investigating the writing experiences of pre-service teachers and their readiness to teach writing, *Issues in Educational Research*, 32(2) pp.513-532

For over a decade, there has been growing concern about declining 'standards' of school students' writing. Teachers' own writing experiences and writer identities are important considerations in developing teacher preparedness and skill in the teaching of writing. It cannot be assumed that pre-service teachers entering university have the pre-requisite skills and experience to effectively teach writing.

This study investigated the pre-entry writing practices of first year Primary and Early Childhood Education (ECE) BEd students at one Australian university. Findings show they most frequently wrote informal, digital texts. It is suggested a lack of experience of writing extended texts, required in the primary English curriculum, may contribute to the decline in school students' achievement in writing, when assessed against national standard benchmarks.

International studies suggest the teaching of writing has not been addressed well in initial teacher education (ITE) courses. This study supports the view that greater attention should be given to the teaching of writing in teacher education courses in order to produce the next generation of 'teacher-writers' capable of improving the quality of writing in primary schools.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; subject knowledge; pedagogical knowledge; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Sieben, N. (2022) Writing Methods Key in Preparing Hope-Focused Teacher-Writers and Teachers of Writing. *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, 11(2), 14

This article emphasises the need for positioning students (preservice and inservice teachers) in methods courses as both teacher-writers and teachers of writing. It demonstrates the importance of teaching writing methods with a hope-focused, process-driven approach grounded in social justice reasoning and includes ways of positioning students in methods courses as teacher-writers with valued professional presence in the field of English education. By way of example, the piece includes a description of a specific "Professional Writings" assignment from a methods course for pre- and inservice teachers and models the value of choice and voice for writers at all levels. It then describes a pedagogy of "writing hope" and details the ways a hope-focused approach to teaching writing processes can guide teachers of writing in their instructional endeavors with K-12 students. The manuscript concludes with how writing methods instruction that includes hope-focused, process-driven approaches grounded in social justice reasons of voice and choice can empower writers at all levels.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; subject knowledge; pedagogical knowledge; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers; hope-based education; writing realities

Martin, A., Rautiainen, A. M., Tarnanen, M., & Tynjälä, P. (2022) Teachers as writing students: narratives of professional development in a leisure-time creative writing community, *Teacher Development*, 26(3), 432-451

The authors explored five in-service teachers' experiences of professional development (PD) in Studies in Writing they participated in during their leisure time.

The following themes were created: (1) Me as a writer, (2) Teaching and pedagogy, and (3) Writing and emotions. To illustrate these findings, three creative narratives were composed based on data excerpts. These ethnodramatic dialogues gave voice to the teachers' diverse PD experiences, enabling the authors to create evocative narratives that can be accessible to broader audiences. They suggest that creative writing communities can support teachers' PD holistically by offering peer support and pedagogical ideas, promoting narrative identity work, and offering a time and place for recovery and flow.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; subject knowledge; pedagogical knowledge; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers; writing realities

Premont, D., Kerkhoff, S., Alsup, J. (2020) "Preservice Teacher Writer Identities: Tensions and Implications," *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, 8 (1)

Because of recent attention underscoring the lack of preservice teachers' (PSTs) writer identities, the purpose of this manuscript is to learn more about the writer identities of two PSTs, how to uncover the tensions that exist therein, and how they intend to enact that writer identity in the secondary classroom.

This multiple case study examines the writer identity of two PSTs from a midwestern university in the United States. The data suggest that contrasting writer identities exist among preservice ELA teachers and that PSTs can have multiple writer identities that are at odds with each other.

- One focal participant saw the potential harm of a structured approach to writing instruction that challenged her beliefs and values on writing and writing instruction.
- Another focal participant wrestled with a separate account of a structured approach to writing instruction, understanding the practical needs in an era of standardised testing while recognizing that such instruction can be limiting.

This manuscript reveals the importance of identity work in preservice teacher education courses by asking PSTs to reflect on and later to interrogate their writer identities, contrasting their discoveries with the research on writer-teacher education.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; subject knowledge; pedagogical knowledge; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Wray, D. (2021) I was never much good at writing: Trainee Teachers' Attributions in Writing, *Research in Teacher Education*, 11 (1), pp. 30-36

It might be thought that, in order to successfully teach a skill or process to others, teachers would need to be fairly competent in that process themselves, and fairly confident in their competence. There is evidence, however, that, in the case of the teaching of writing, this may not actually be true.

This article explores some of the background to this problem and reports an investigation into the self-perceived competence in writing of teachers in training. It goes on to argue that, in the attributions these young teachers make about their success or failure in writing, there are important implications for the teaching and development of writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; writing for pleasure; teacher self-efficacy; subject knowledge; pedagogical knowledge; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training;

Opatz, M. O., & Nelson, E. T. (2022) The Evolution from Mentor Texts to Critical Mentor Text Sets, *Teaching/Writing The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, 11(2), 12

This article chronicles how two teacher educators changed the mentor text set assignment--one component of a larger writing unit plan--from a simple list of texts to a critical mentor text set that includes intentionally selected, culturally and linguistically diverse texts. The goal of the critical mentor text set was to support preservice teachers' understanding of how to implement culturally sustaining writing pedagogy through developing students' identities, skills, and intellect as writers, and students' abilities to read texts through a critical stance that evaluates the privilege and power within the texts while working towards anti-oppression.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; mentor texts; genre study; writing realities; culturally sustaining pedagogy; literacy for pleasure; connecting reading and writing

Lesley, M., Higgins, A., Beach, W., Stewart, E., & Keene, J. (2022). Shared Accountability: How One School Is Reforming a Writing Curriculum through Sustained Engaged Scholarship. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 1-24

Many high schools in the United States are contending with modest student writing achievement and looking for ways to enhance teachers' writing instruction. This is especially the case for schools deemed to be "underperforming" and struggling to reform writing pedagogy against an accumulation of teacher and leadership turnover, limited resources, minimal teacher preparation in writing pedagogy, and a persistent gap in student literacy development. Realising optimal learning conditions cannot be addressed by a single entity, we conducted an engaged scholarship study focused on writing reform in a high school facing these very issues. Through a school-university partnership carried out across three years' time, we witnessed the transformation of teachers as they participated in sustained professional development, collaboration, and examination of their practices. In the present study, we turned the lens on ourselves to examine the process of conducting engaged scholarship. We found enacting collective efficacy through shared research and knowledge with a literacy coach and ninth and tenth grade English teachers brought about incremental and sustained writing reform and reframed our views of researcher roles and responsibilities.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; professional development; teacher orientations; secondary education

Gardner, P. (2014) Becoming a teacher of writing: Primary student teachers reviewing their relationship with writing, *English in Education*, 48(2), 128–148

This article investigates the extent to which Year One B.Ed student teachers arrived at university already possessing self-confidence as writers. The article argues that to consciously engage student teachers in the writing process and to require them to reflect on that process can lead to their self efficacy as writers. Evidence from this study suggests one's self-confidence, as a writer, is enhanced by explicitly engaging in self reflection of one's own approaches to writing. The findings have implications for course design of literacy components in teacher education internationally.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; subject knowledge; pedagogical knowledge; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Kohnen, A. M., Caprino, K., Crane, S., Townsend, J. S. (2019) Where is the Writing Teacher? Preservice Teachers' Perspectives on the Teaching of Writing, *Writing and Pedagogy*, 11(2), 285–310.

This article identifies how a cohort of preservice teachers educated during the No Child Left Behind Era thought about the teaching of writing when they entered a secondary English Language Arts (ELA) teacher preparation program.

Most participants shared the beliefs that:

- Writing was primarily the demonstration of specific skills, often on a standardised test
- Alternatives to the five-paragraph essay would be extra, with formulaic writing central to instruction
- Teachers had little role in student writing development beyond assigning writing
- Feedback on writing should be 'objective' and tied to a grade

- The purpose of English Language Arts is primarily to teach literature.

Authors believe identifying preservice teachers' beliefs about writing and the role of the writing teacher at the beginning of a program can help teacher educators design experiences to expand students' notions of literacy and of writing instruction.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; national writing project; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Whyte, A., Lazerte, A., Thomson, I., Ellis, N., Muse, A., Talbot, R. (2007) The National Writing Project, teachers' writing lives, and student achievement in writing, *Action in Teacher Education*, 29(2), 5–16

This survey research on National Writing Project (NWP) teachers and comparison teachers in a southeastern state found that the NWP teachers wrote more than the comparison teachers did and that the participating teachers' writing was associated with students' achievement in writing.

The pattern of the impact of writing life on achievement was different among the NWP teachers than it was among the comparison teachers: NWP teachers who wrote had students whose achievement in writing increased significantly, whereas comparison teachers and NWP teachers who wrote less did not.

This finding of an interaction effect between NWP affiliation and teachers' writing life in association with student achievement suggests that the writing by teachers central to NWP professional development may combine with the two other core elements of the NWP's programs across its 198 sites (demonstrations of practices for teaching writing and professional reading and study) to improve student achievement in writing.

In light of the nature of modelling and feedback during NWP summer institute and extension programs, these findings have implications for preservice teacher education and in-service programs serving elementary as well as secondary teachers and across the school subjects.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; national writing project; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Norman, K., Spencer, B. (2005) Our lives as writers: Examining preservice teachers' experiences and beliefs about the nature of writing and writing instruction, *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32(1), 25–40

The ability to communicate through writing is central to school success and is essential for successful participation in the workplace and in a democratic society. When preservice teachers enter teacher education programs, they have had numerous opportunities to write both in and out of school and have been exposed to a range of pedagogical approaches to the teaching of writing. These experiences have not only shaped their skills as writers and their attitudes toward writing, but also their beliefs and values about the very nature of writing, writing development, and writing instruction.

Evidence suggests that even if these belief systems are implicit, they serve to filter new information as candidates attempt to make sense of curricula that may or may not mirror their personal experiences. If beliefs remain unexamined, new learning afforded by preparation courses may not influence their views or be applied to teaching contexts. Thus, preservice teachers' histories influence what and how they learn in formal coursework and the pedagogical decisions they make in the classroom. Since instruction in writing theory and pedagogy for preservice teachers is often limited, it is essential that teacher educators provide learning experiences that are supported by research in effective teacher preparation and make maximum impact in the time available.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer-teacher; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pedagogical knowledge; national writing project; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Myers, J., Scales, R.Q., Grisham, D.L., Wolsey, T.D., Dismuke, S., Smetana, L., Kreider, K., Ikpeze, Y., Ganske, K., Martin, S. (2016) What about writing?: A national exploratory study of writing instruction in teacher preparation programs, *Literacy Research & Instruction*, 55, 309–330

This small scale, exploratory study reveals how writing instruction is taught to preservice teachers across the United States in university-based preservice teacher education programs based on online survey results from 63 teacher educators in literacy from 50 institutions.

Despite the growing writing demands and high stakes writing sample testing in K-12 classrooms, our survey of literacy teacher educators indicated that teacher preparation programs rarely offer stand-alone writing instruction methods courses. Evidence suggests that writing methods are frequently embedded in reading methods courses. Equally concerning, data indicate a lack of confidence among many teacher educators regarding teaching writing methods. This study highlights the need for greater attention to writing in teacher preparation programs and adds to the conversation of why these issues continue to plague higher education.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Norman, K., Spencer, B. (2005) Our lives as writers: Examining preservice teachers' experiences and beliefs about the nature of writing and writing instruction, *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32(1), 25–40

Since instruction in writing theory and pedagogy for preservice teachers is often limited, it is essential that teacher educators provide learning experiences that are supported by research in effective teacher preparation and make maximum impact in the time available. One of the experiences that has been identified as holding promise for effective teacher preparation is having candidates examine their personal theories and beliefs in relation to theory and practice.

Personal histories or autobiographies serve to make explicit and external one's ideas, theories, and beliefs about teaching and learning. In literacy education, personal histories have been employed to examine the factors that influence preservice teachers' attitudes toward reading, the effects of specific instructional approaches, such as reading and writing workshops on teachers' perceptions of themselves as readers and writers, and the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward reading and writing and their confidence in teaching literacy. In this article, the authors report a study that used autobiographies to examine the beliefs and experiences of preservice teachers about writing and writing instruction. The following research questions were examined:

- What are preservice teachers' perceptions of themselves as writers?
- How do people and experiences shape preservice teachers' views of writing instruction and learning to write?

Four themes that emerged from this study are: (1) positive self-concepts; (2) preferences for personal/creative writing; (3) salient characteristics of effective teachers and instruction; and (4) an interplay between views of the nature of writing and the perceived value of writing instruction.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Street, C. (2003) Pre-service teachers' attitudes about writing and learning to teach writing: Implications for teacher educators, *Teacher Education Quarterly Summer*, 30(3), 33–50.

This study examined the perceptions of preservice teachers as they reflected upon teaching the writing process to second grade students over the course of one semester. Implications for teacher educators were identified based on the findings:

- Preservice teachers benefited from teaching writing on a consistent basis
- Preservice teachers learned and applied the course content in a highly individualistic manner suggesting that they also must be scaffolded in the learning process
- The design and organisation of the field-based experience was an influential variable in their learning.
- Effective components of a field-based experience included working with a small group of students, teaching in groups of three, and receiving support and feedback from a variety of sources.

Free access (if read online): [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Morgan, D., Pytash, K. (2014) Preparing preservice teachers to become teachers of writing: A 20-year review of the research literature, *National Council of Teachers of English*, 47(1), 6–37.

Morgan and Pytash, in their review of the 31 published peer-reviewed research studies focused on preparing preservice teachers to teach writing, argue for an explicit focus on writing teacher preparation in undergraduate teacher education programs.

Morgan and Pytash contend that the teaching of reading and the teaching of literature overshadow the teaching of writing, and they argue that it is time to rebalance the focus of teacher preparation classrooms. They also point out that there is a need for further research in how preservice teachers learn and enact the teaching of writing.

Free access (if read online): [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Morgan, D. (2010) Preservice teachers as writers, *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 49, 352–365

This study examines 42 early childhood preservice teachers' experiences in a writing methods course. Findings indicated that preservice teachers began the class with a strong sense of themselves as writers along the good–bad writing dichotomy. Throughout their experiences in a writing methods course the preservice teachers identified four instructional strategies and experiences as helpful in developing a more positive sense of self as writer and as future writing teacher. These included:

- Reading like a writer
- Having similar writing experiences in class as their future students
- Writing regularly and having choice in topic
- Designing writing mini-lessons.

This study adds to the research on preservice teachers' attitudes and perceptions about writing but also extends our understanding in what specific knowledge preservice teachers name as valuable from their course experience.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Kaufman, D. (2009) A teacher educator writes and shares: Student perceptions of a publicly literate life, *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60, 338

A literature review reveals limited information regarding the modelling of authentic writing practises by teacher educators for their students. This study examines the effect of the author's modelling processes as evidenced by education students' assessments of his courses. The author analysed data using a grounded approach to document their perceptions of the benefits of his in-class writing and sharing of literacy work.

Responses revealed perceptions of five primary benefits, underscoring both academic and affective components.

- Perceived academic benefits included the learning of skills, strategies, and methods that influence a teacher's ability to address intellectual or technical aspects of classroom life.
- Perceived affective benefits included the enhancement of student motivation and the creation of a respectful, caring, and trustworthy learning community.

Together, responses appeared to set the stage for the establishment of a more complex, multifaceted classroom discourse.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Helfrich, S., Clark, S. (2016) A comparative examination of pre-service teacher self-efficacy related to literacy instruction, *Reading Psychology*, 37, 943–961

This study investigated differences in self-efficacy to teach literacy between two groups of pre-service teachers. The authors hypothesised that pre-service teachers enrolled in one program focusing on fewer grade levels (K–3) and requiring more literacy-focused courses would have higher self-efficacy than pre-service teachers enrolled in another program focusing on more grade levels (K–6) and requiring fewer literacy-focused courses. However, the opposite findings were realised. Moreover, results demonstrated that regardless of program, pre-service teachers felt less efficacious about teaching writing when compared to teaching reading. Implications for teacher educators and recommendations for literacy instruction are discussed.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Hall, A., Grisham-Brown, J. (2011) Writing development over time: Examining preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs about writing, *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 32, 148–158

Since writing ability has been found to be a key indicator of school success and successful participation in the workplace, it is important for preservice teachers to receive effective preparation in the area of writing. Reflecting on personal writing experiences allows preservice teachers to examine their own attitudes and beliefs about writing and the effects their attitudes and beliefs may have on their pedagogical decisions in the future.

This article describes the findings from two focus groups conducted with preschool and elementary preservice teachers during which participants examined their attitudes towards writing that have developed over time and their plans for future writing instruction. The following three broad themes emerged related to key influences in the development of positive and negative attitudes towards writing:

- Having writing published or showcased increases positive attitudes towards writing
- Creative opportunities and process-oriented teaching strategies provide the most meaningful writing experiences
- Negative feedback from teachers adversely impacts self-confidence in writing skills and leads to negative attitudes towards writing

Three themes related to views of writing instruction and pedagogical decisions for the future also emerged from the focus groups. These were:

- Embedding writing opportunities throughout the day helps provide quality writing instruction,
- Preservice teachers who struggle with writing mechanics are hesitant about teaching these skills to their future students
- Preservice teachers do not agree on one specific methodology for teaching writing or the amount of time that they will teach writing in the future

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Hall, A. (2016) Examining shifts in preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward writing instruction, *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 37(2), 142–156

The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of integrating self-reflection, focused instruction, and field practice in a semester-long language arts course in order to shift early childhood preservice teachers' beliefs and attitudes about writing instruction, as well as their development and planned use of tools for instruction.

The findings revealed that a course focused primarily on preparing PSTs to teach writing can influence PSTs' definitions of writing, the importance they place on writing instruction, their self-efficacy related to teaching writing, and their tools for instruction.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Gardner, P. (2014) Becoming a teacher of writing: Primary student teachers reviewing their relationship with writing, *English in Education*, 48(2), 128–148

This article investigates the extent to which Year One B.Ed student teachers arrived at university already possessing self-confidence as writers.

The article argues that to consciously engage student teachers in the writing process and to require them to reflect on that process can lead to their self efficacy as writers. Evidence from this study suggests one's self-confidence, as a writer, is enhanced by explicitly engaging in self reflection of one's own approaches to writing. The findings have implications for course design of literacy components in teacher education internationally.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Domaille, K., Edwards, J. (2006) Partnerships for learning: Extending knowledge and understanding of creative writing processes in the ITT year, *English in Education*, 40(2), 71–84

This article explores the idea that in order to improve the ways we teach children to write creatively it is worth exploring how we, as teachers and writers, do that ourselves.

It describes some of the stages of a curriculum development project undertaken in the Portsmouth and Southampton Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) English teams, begun in 2004. The project was supported by funding from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and was designed to foster a range of learning activities for trainee teachers in the area of teaching creative writing to pupils in schools.

The project that was developed had multiple aims:

- Subject knowledge development in trainee English teachers
- Pedagogic exploration amongst all teachers involved looking at how the difficult area of teaching creative writing might be better addressed.

This article evaluates the aims of the project and some of the outcomes and argues for recognition of the training year as a vital area for exploring issues in teaching, beyond competence. The article draws on a variety of sources, including participant observation notes made in writing workshops, responses to a questionnaire completed by project participants and excerpts from writing collected across the project produced by teachers and pupils.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Dobson, T. (2016) 'Just because I'm not a published author does not mean that I'm not a writer': Primary trainee teachers' identities as creative writers, *Writing in Practice: The Journal of Creative Writing Research*, 2

This article explores the idea that in order to improve the ways we teach children to write creatively it is worth exploring how we, as teachers and writers, do that ourselves. It describes some of the stages of a curriculum development project undertaken in the Portsmouth and Southampton Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) English teams, begun in 2004. The project was supported by funding from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and was designed to foster a range of learning activities for trainee teachers in the area of teaching creative writing to pupils in schools.

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Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

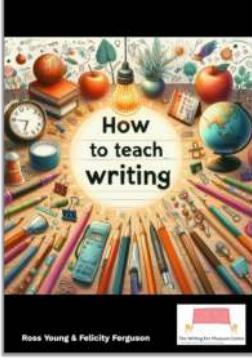
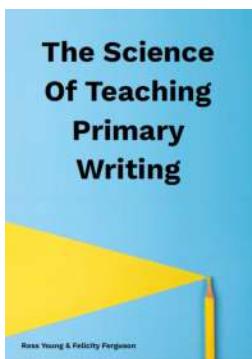
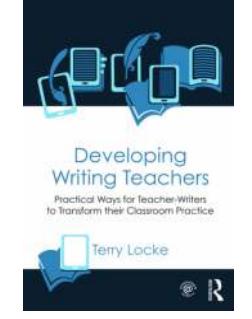
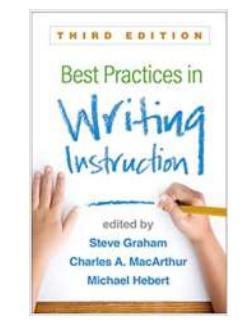
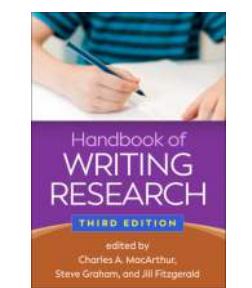
Deegan, J. (2008) Teacher-writer memoirs as lens for writing emotionally in a primary teacher education programme, *Teaching Education*, 19(3), 185–196

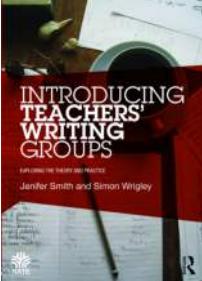
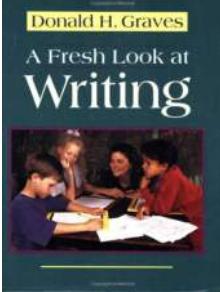
This article examines student teachers' experiences of writing emotionally through the lens of teacher-writer memoirs. The participants were 99 postgraduate student teachers on a sociology of teaching module in an initial primary teacher education programme in the Republic of Ireland. Analysis of journal responses indicated how student teachers shaped and reshaped their emergent identities through discourse, memory, emotions, and personal biography and along a values-action continuum. Individual freedom was evidenced in moving towards danger and new ways of doing things. Conformity was evidenced in maintaining the status quo and familiar ways of doing things. Implications for teacher education renewal and reform are discussed.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: initial teacher education; initial teacher training; pre-service teachers

Recommended chapters and literature

	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2025) <i>How To Teach Writing</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]</p>
	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2022) <i>The Science Of Teaching Primary Writing</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]</p>
	<p>Locke, T. (2015) <i>Developing Writing Teachers</i> London: Routledge.</p>
	<p>Graham, S., MacArthur, C., Hebert, M. (2019) <i>Best Practices in Writing Instruction</i> New York: The Guilford Press</p>
	<p>MacArthur, C., Graham, S., Fitzgerald, J. (2025) <i>Handbook Of Writing Research</i> New York, NY: Guilford</p>

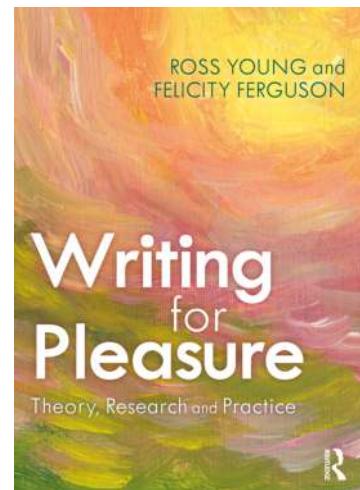
	<p>Smith, J., Wrigley, S. (2015) <i>Introducing Teachers' Writing Groups</i> London: Routledge</p>
	<p>Graves, D. (1991) <i>Discover Your Own Literacy</i> Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann</p>
	<p>Graves, D. (1994) <i>A Fresh Look At Writing</i> Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann</p>

Chapter 3

Self-Efficacy (Writing Confidence)

Introduction

This chapter discusses the affective domain of self-efficacy, also described as self-belief, self-esteem, self-worth, self-affirmation, self-integrity, positive self-image, and the feeling of competence in writing and developing as a writer. Theory, research, and educational practices associated with developing children's self-efficacy in writing and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are explored. This includes discussing the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers with high and low levels of self-efficacy. Finally, the authors describe the relationship between developing apprentice writers' self-efficacy and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching. They give examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.



[DOWNLOAD CHAPTER](#)

Graham, S., Ng, C., Hebert, M., Santangelo, T., Aitken, A. A., Camping, A., & Nusrat, A. (2025). Can teaching writing enhance students' writing self-efficacy: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 117(4), 559–581.

This meta-analysis investigates whether instructional interventions can successfully enhance the writing self-efficacy of students from kindergarten to Grade 12. By examining over 100 comparisons, the researchers determined that teaching writing generally has a statistically significant positive effect on how students perceive their own writing competence. Specifically, approaches like goal setting, strategy instruction (SRSD), and targeted feedback were found to be the most effective at boosting confidence and performance.

Conversely, instruction focused solely on writing skills like grammar or spelling actually led to a decrease in self-efficacy, potentially by highlighting a student's perceived deficiencies.

The study concludes that because self-efficacy is malleable, educators can use process-oriented instruction to foster more resilient and motivated writers. Ultimately, the findings suggest that instructionally induced gains in writing quality often predict a corresponding rise in a student's belief in their own abilities.

The following are the implications for practice:

- **Recognise that writing self-efficacy is malleable:** Teachers should understand that students' beliefs about their competence as writers are not fixed; they can be positively influenced through deliberate writing instruction.
- **Use writing instruction to achieve dual goals:** Because improvements in writing performance often predict gains in self-efficacy, teachers can simultaneously enhance both students' writing skills and their confidence by providing effective instructional assistance.
- **Prioritise process-oriented instruction:** Writing treatments that focus on teaching the writing processes (such as planning, drafting, and revising) are more likely to result in self-efficacy gains than those focused solely on the final written product.
- **Implement Goal Setting:** Teachers should encourage students to set specific goals or assign goals for them, as this provides a standard for students to compare their performance against, which significantly boosts both writing quality and efficacy.
- **Utilise Strategy Instruction, specifically the SRSD model:** Teaching students explicit strategies for planning, drafting, and revising is effective, but using the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model is particularly beneficial for self-efficacy because it integrates self-regulation procedures like goal setting and self-assessment.
- **Provide Instructional Feedback:** Offering feedback helps students internalise the criteria for good writing, which can lead to changes in writing behaviour and a heightened sense of competence.
- **Exercise caution with isolated writing skills instruction:** Explicitly teaching skills such as spelling, handwriting, or grammar in isolation has been shown to potentially decrease writing self-efficacy, particularly in older students (Grades 5–12) who may perceive such instruction as a sign of basic incompetence.
- **Monitor and adjust instruction:** While research-backed treatments like goal setting and SRSD are generally effective for both typical and at-risk writers across various grade levels, teachers should closely monitor individual student outcomes and adjust their approach to meet specific classroom

needs.

- **Incorporate multiple informational sources:** Self-efficacy is built through various channels, including mastery experiences (successful completion), vicarious experiences (observing others), and persuasion (feedback); instruction is most effective when it provides students with several of these avenues to judge their own competence.

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Tags: self-efficacy; mastery goals; growth mindset; teach the writing processes; set writing goals; self-regulation strategy development instruction; pupil-conferencing; verbal feedback; formative assessment; balance composition and transcription; responsive teaching

Skar, G. B., Graham, S., & Huebner, A. R. (2023). Efficacy for writing self-regulation, attitude toward writing, and quality of second grade students' writing. *Frontiers in psychology*, 14, 1265785. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1265785>

This study delves into the intricate relationship between motivational beliefs, specifically writing self-efficacy and attitude toward writing, and their impact on the writing behaviours of Grade 2 Norwegian students. Examining a cohort of 2,124 students (1,069 girls; 1,055 boys), we sought to understand potential gender and language status differences in these motivational beliefs and their unique contributions to predicting the quality of students' writing. Our findings reveal that girls exhibit a more positive attitude toward writing and greater confidence in their abilities to self-regulate writing when compared to boys. Interestingly, "bilingual" students, those with Norwegian and another language as their first language, displayed a more positive attitude toward writing than their counterparts. Importantly, both self-efficacy for writing self-regulation and attitude toward writing emerged as significant predictors of writing quality.

Despite these influences, it's noteworthy that these writing beliefs collectively accounted for only 2% of the variance in writing quality scores when individual- and school-related factors were taken into account. This highlights the complex interplay of various factors in shaping students' writing outcomes. In light of these findings, we discuss recommendations for future research, emphasising the need for a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted influences on writing quality. Additionally, we explore the implications of our results for educators, shedding light on potential areas for targeted interventions to enhance students' motivational beliefs and, consequently, their writing proficiency.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation; self-regulation; writing quality

Snyders, C. (2014) 'I Wish We Could Make Books All Day!' An Observational Study of Kindergarten Children During Writing Workshop, *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 42 pp.405-414

The purpose of this study was to explore the development of kindergarten writers within a writing workshop. Research questions focused on writer identity, writing self-efficacy, and growth as kindergarten writers. The study concluded that a writing workshop approach provides a learning environment that was conducive to the formation of children's writing identities. As students engaged in writing mini-lessons, genre-study, writing, and sharing writing with peers, student writing stamina and engagement increased. Students utilized techniques and strategies of published writers. Students adopted these qualities in their views of themselves as writers.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation; writer-identity; writing workshop; early writers; emergent writers

Kim, Y., Mariani, M. (2019) The Effects Of Self-regulated Learning Strategies On Preschool Children's Self-efficacy And Performance In Early Writing, *International Journal of Education*, 11(2):99

To enhance the will and the skills to express thoughts explicitly and effectively in early writing among preschool children, self-regulated learning (SRL) is suggested as one effective teaching approach. This study investigated the effects of SRL strategies on early writing self-efficacy and early writing performance among preschool children. The study confirmed the effectiveness of self-regulated learning. It increased and supported children's:

- Self-efficacy
- Goal setting, planning self-monitoring and self-evaluation
- Writing performance and writing quality

The findings of this research provide a useful insight into early writing and self-regulated learning instruction.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation; self-regulation strategy instruction; self-regulation; goal setting; early writers; emergent writers

Green, J., Steber, K. (2021) "The Evolution of an Elementary Writing Workshop: Fostering Teacher Efficacy and Authentic Authorship in Young Writers," *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*, 10 (1), Article 3.

Building confidence and efficacy in young writers is critical to long-term academic success, but for many teachers, writing is a complex and challenging discipline to teach. This case study examines the evolution of a writing workshop in an elementary classroom. Data sheds light on the phenomena of student motivation, teacher efficacy, and culturally responsive approaches to writing. Collaborative teaching methods and careful attention to the principles of writing workshop contributed to an enriching journey for the teacher, and her third-grade students.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation; be a writer-teacher; reassuringly consistent routine; writing workshop; culturally sustaining pedagogy

Schunk, D.H. (2003). Self-efficacy for reading and writing: Influence of modelling, goal setting, and self-evaluation, *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 19, 159–172.

Perceived self-efficacy, or students' personal beliefs about their capabilities to learn or perform behaviours at designated levels, plays an important role in their motivation and learning. Self-efficacy is a key mechanism in social cognitive theory, which postulates that achievement depends on interactions between behaviours, personal factors, and environmental conditions. Self-efficacy affects choice of tasks, effort, persistence, and achievement. Sources of self-efficacy information include personal accomplishments, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological indicators. At the outset of learning activities, students have goals and a sense of self-efficacy for attaining them. Self-evaluations of learning progress sustain self-efficacy and motivation. Research on academic learning is summarised, showing how modelling, goal setting, and self-evaluation affect self-efficacy, motivation, and learning. Suggestions for applying these ideas to teaching are provided.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation; mastery orientation; build a community of writers; set writing goals; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects

Schunk, D.H., Zimmerman, B.J. (2007) Influencing children's self-efficacy and self-regulation of reading and writing through modelling, *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 23, 7–25

According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy and self-regulation are key processes that affect students' learning and achievement. This article discusses students' reading and writing performances using Zimmerman's four-phase social cognitive model of the development of self-regulatory competence. Modelling is an effective means of building self-regulatory and academic skills and of raising self-efficacy. Reading and writing research is discussed in which modelling was employed to enhance self-efficacy, skills, and self-regulation across multiple phases of Zimmerman's model. The article concludes by suggesting instructional applications based on social cognitive theory and research findings.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; self-regulation; teach mini-lessons; writing study; be a writer-teacher; modelling

Pajares, F. (2003) Self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing: A review of the literature, *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 19(2), 139–158

The purpose of this article is to examine the contribution made by the self-efficacy to the study of writing in academic settings. A brief overview of Bandura's social cognitive theory and of self-efficacy is first provided, followed by a description of the manner in which writing self-efficacy beliefs are typically operationalized and assessed. This is followed by a synthesis of research findings that address the relationship between writing self-efficacy, other motivation constructs related to writing, and writing outcomes in academic settings. These findings demonstrate that students' confidence in their writing capabilities influence their writing motivation as well as various writing outcomes in school. Academic implications and strategies that may help guide future research are offered.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation

Pajares, F., Valiante, G. (1997) Influence of self-efficacy on elementary students' writing, *The Journal of Educational Research*, 90(6), 353–360

This research study wanted to test the influence of writing self-efficacy, writing apprehension, perceived usefulness of writing, and writing aptitude on the essay-writing performance of 218 fifth-grade students. A model that also included sex accounted for 64% of the variance in performance. As hypothesised, self-efficacy beliefs made an independent contribution to the prediction of performance despite the expected powerful effect of writing aptitude. Aptitude also had a strong direct effect on self-efficacy, which mediated the indirect effect of aptitude on performance. Self-efficacy had direct effects on apprehension and perceived usefulness. Girls and boys did not differ in performance, but girls reported higher writing self-efficacy, found writing more useful, and had lower apprehension.

(£) [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation

Pajares, F., Johnson, M., Usher, E. (2007) Sources of writing self-efficacy beliefs of elementary, middle, and high school students, *Research in the Teaching of English*, 42(1), 104–120

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of Albert Bandura's four hypothesised sources of self-efficacy on students' writing self-efficacy beliefs and to explore how these sources differ as a function of gender and academic level (elementary, middle, high). Consistent with the tenets of self-efficacy theory, each of the sources significantly correlated with writing self-efficacy and with each other. As hypothesised, students perceived mastery experience accounted for the greatest proportion of the variance in writing self-efficacy. This was the case for girls and for boys, as well as for students in elementary school, middle school, and high school. Social persuasions and anxiety also predicted self-efficacy, albeit modestly. Vicarious experience did not predict writing self-efficacy. Girls reported greater mastery experience, vicarious experience, and social persuasions, as well as lower writing anxiety. Girls also reported stronger writing self-efficacy and were rated better writers by their teachers. Elementary school students reported stronger mastery experience, vicarious experience, and social persuasions than did either middle school or high school students. Elementary school students also reported stronger self-efficacy.

Free access (if read online): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation; mastery orientation; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects

Corden, R. (2003) Writing is more than 'exciting': Equipping primary children to become reflective writers, *Reading Literacy and Language*, 37, 18–26

This article describes work undertaken as part of a partnership programme initiated to encourage collaborative research between teachers and university tutors. In the Teaching Reading and Writing Links project (TRAWL) primary school teachers, working as research partners, explored ways of developing children as reflective writers. The research group wanted to know whether, through examining how texts are crafted by expert writers during literacy sessions, children might be encouraged to pay more attention to compositional rather than secretarial aspects of narrative writing during writing workshops. The overall writing achievement of 338 children was monitored over one school year and narrative writing from 60 case study children was evaluated at the beginning and end of the research period. In this article the impact on achievement is illustrated, some examples of writing are analysed and evidence of development in children's metacognition and confidence as writers is discussed.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; metacognition; mentor texts; genre-theory; balance composition and transcription; writing workshop

Gadd, M., Parr, J., Robertson, J., Carran, L., Ali, Z., Gendall, L., Watson K. (2019) Portrait of the student as a young writer: Some student survey findings about attitudes to writing and self-efficacy as writers. *Literacy*, 53(4), 226–235

This New Zealand-based article reports on an analysis of data gathered over two years from upper primary school students on their attitudes to writing and writing instruction and their beliefs about their self-efficacy as developing writers. Conclusions (including student comments) were made about students' likes, dislikes and

preferences as developing writers. Levels of association between their attitudes and gender and between their attitudes and proficiency levels were explored. Conclusions were also made about how student attitudes affect teacher practice.

(£) [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; pupil voice; children's view on writing teaching

Graham, S., Berninger, V., Fan, W. (2007) The structural relationship between writing attitude and writing achievement in first and third grade students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 32, 516–535

This study tested three models of the structural relationship between the writing achievement of primary grade students and their attitude towards writing (defined here as an affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy). Although third grade students were better writers than first grade students, there was no statistical difference in younger and older students' attitude towards writing. In addition, girls were more positive about writing than boys, but there was no statistical difference in their writing achievement related to gender. This research extends models based on the cognitive and language processes of writing to include the role of attitude, which is an affective component of motivation.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation; cognitive theory

Hachem, A., Nabhani, M., Bahous, R. (2008) 'We can write!' The writing workshop for young learners, *Education 3–13*, 36(4), 325–337

The study presents the process of differentiated instruction, its implementation, and impact on second graders in a Lebanese school. It analyses how writing instruction has been differentiated through implementing the writing workshop to help students demonstrate improved writing skills. It examines the effects of second graders' participation in the writing workshop and discusses the factors that enabled students to develop their writing skills. Data collection includes pre- and post-writing samples, reflective journal and checklists during individual conferences. Findings show that students' writing skills improved as reflected in their progression of text, expansion of ideas, and development in conventional writing.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; writing workshop; balance composition and transcription; be reassuring consistent

Limpo, T., Alves, R. (2017) Relating beliefs in writing skill malleability to writing performance: The mediating role of achievement goals and self-efficacy, *Journal of Writing Research*, 9(2), 97–125.

It is well established that students' beliefs in skill malleability influence their academic performance. Specifically, thinking of ability as an incremental (vs. fixed) trait is associated with better outcomes. Overall, students' mastery goals and self-efficacy for self-regulation seem to be key factors underlying the link between beliefs in writing skill malleability and writing performance. These findings highlight the importance of attending to motivation-related components in the teaching of writing.

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Tags: self-efficacy; self-regulation; mastery-orientation; motivation

Recommended chapters and literature

	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2021) 'Self-regulation' In <i>Writing For Pleasure</i> London: Routledge LINK</p>
	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2021) 'Volition' In <i>Writing For Pleasure</i> London: Routledge LINK</p> <p>This chapter discusses the affective domain volition, which is defined as the need, desire, urge, or the internal compulsion to write, sometimes described as purposive striving or personal endorsement. The authors present evidence which shows how engagement of volition stimulates apprentice writers' desire to harness the knowledge and skills necessary for the creation of excellent written texts. Theory, research, and educational practices associated with developing children's volition to write and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are also explored in this chapter. Consideration is given to the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers who feel high or low levels of volition. Finally, the authors describe the relationship between apprentice writers' volition to write and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching. Included are examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.</p>

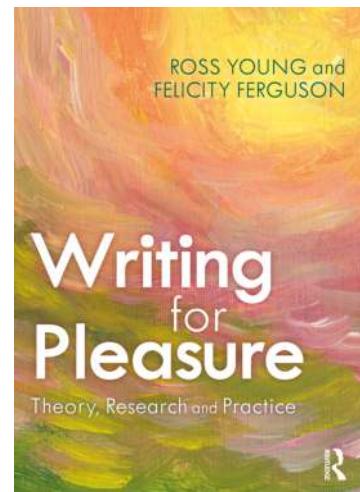
Chapter 4

Self-Regulation (Competence & Independence)

Introduction

This chapter discusses the affective domain of self-regulation, also described as autonomy supporting, self-initiation, self-activation, self-generating, self-organising, self-directed, self-discipline, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, responsible decision-making, co-regulation, relationship management, time planning and self-management, socially-shared regulation, and the metacognition involved in writing and developing as a writer. There is a large amount of empirical evidence now available showing the positive link between self-regulated metacognitive learning and academic achievement.

Theory, research, and educational practices associated with developing children's self-regulation in writing and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are explored. This includes discussing the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers with high and low levels of self-regulation. Finally, the authors describe the relationship between developing apprentice writers' self-regulation and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching. They give examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.



[DOWNLOAD CHAPTER](#)

Hacker, D. J. (2018). A metacognitive model of writing: An update from a developmental perspective. *Educational Psychologist*, 53(4), 220-237

This research paper explores a metacognitive model of writing, updating an earlier theory to reflect a developmental perspective on how children learn. The text argues that writing is primarily a process of applied metacognition, where a writer's internal "meta-level" monitors and controls the "object-level" strategies used to generate text.

By reviewing literature on metalinguistics and metapragmatics, Hacker demonstrates that even children as young as three or four years old possess the monitoring and control capabilities necessary for early writing.

The model suggests that the act of writing provides a permanent external representation of thought, allowing the creator to treat their own language as an object for investigation and refinement. Hacker concludes by proposing future research into learning to read by learning to write, emphasising that writing serves as a vital tool for understanding the structure and function of language.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation; metacognition; metalinguistics; metapragmatics; reading as a writer; teach the writing processes; writing as thinking

Klein, P., Bildfell, A., Dombroski, J. D., Giese, C., Sha, K. W. Y., & Thompson, S. C. (2022). Self-regulation in early writing strategy instruction, *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 38(2), 101-125

Experimental research on strategy instruction for beginning writers has only recently begun. This study investigated the role of self-regulation instruction in Grade 1 strategy learning. In a pretest-post-test quasi-experiment, 120 Grade 1 students participated in a unit of study on personal narrative in one of three conditions: (1) Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), which included instruction in goal-setting, strategy steps, coping, self-monitoring, and self-reinforcement; (2) strategy instruction only (SO), which focused on the goal and steps of the strategy; (3) a control condition. Students in both strategy conditions, relative to the control, made large, statistically significant gains in text quality, word count, story features, and self-regulation knowledge. The SRSD condition resulted in greater self-regulation knowledge than the SO condition, which resulted in greater knowledge than the control. Pretest text quality did not interact significantly with condition. The effect of instruction on text quality was largely mediated by post-test self-regulation knowledge.

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Tags: self-regulation; self-regulation strategy development instruction; emergent writers; early writers; set writing goals; metacognition; process goals; product goals

According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy and self-regulation are key processes that affect students' learning and achievement. This article discusses students' reading and writing performances using Zimmerman's four-phase social cognitive model of the development of self-regulatory competence. Modelling is an effective means of building self-regulatory and academic skills and of raising self-efficacy. Reading and writing research is discussed in which modelling was employed to enhance self-efficacy, skills, and self-regulation across multiple phases of Zimmerman's model. The article concludes by suggesting instructional applications based on social cognitive theory and research findings.

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Tags: social cognitive theory; self-efficacy; self-regulation; teach mini-lessons; writing study; be a writer-teacher

Zimmerman B., and Risemberg, R. (1997) Becoming a self-regulated writer: A social cognitive perspective, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 22, 73–101.

Becoming an adept writer involves more than knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, it depends on high levels of personal regulation because writing activities are usually self-planned, self-initiated, and self-sustained. We present a social cognitive model of writing composed of three fundamental forms of self-regulation: environmental, behavioural, and covert or personal.

Each of these triadic forms of self-regulation interact reciprocally via a cyclic feedback loop through which writers self-monitor and self-react to feedback about the effectiveness of specific self-regulatory techniques or processes. Well known writers' personal descriptions of ten major self-regulatory techniques are recounted, and empirical studies demonstrating the effectiveness of these self-regulatory techniques are discussed. We conclude that writing self-regulation is a complex system of interdependent processes that are closely linked to an underlying sense of self-efficacy, and we discuss implications of the proposed model of self-regulatory processes and self-beliefs for guiding future research and developing innovative writing instruction.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: social cognitive theory; self-efficacy; self-regulation; teach mini-lessons; writing study; be a writer-teacher

Zumbrunn, S, Bruning, R. (2013) Improving the writing and knowledge of emergent writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development, *Reading and Writing. An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 26(1), 91–110

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of implementing the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model of instruction on the writing skills and knowledge of six seven-year-old students. The study wanted to test the effectiveness of the SRSD intervention, which included story writing and self-regulation strategy instruction.

Results indicated that SRSD can be beneficial for six and seven-year old writers. Participants wrote stories that contained more essential components, were longer, and of better quality after SRSD instruction. Participants also showed improvement in writing knowledge from pre- to post-instruction.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation; teach mini-lessons; writing study

Perry, N.E., VandeKamp, K. J. O. (2000) Creating classroom contexts that support young children's development of self-regulated learning, *International Journal of Educational Research*, 33(7), 821–843

The purpose of the research is twofold:

- to identify features of classroom environments that promote self-regulated approaches to writing in young children
- to work collaboratively with teachers, helping them become proficient at designing tasks and structuring interactions with students that promote self-regulated learning

Five primary teachers and their students were involved in the study. Evidence from classroom observations indicates that these five teachers consistently involved their students in:

- Authentic and purposeful class writing projects
- Choosing what to write about

- Modifying tasks to control challenge
- Evaluating their writing processes and products.

These teachers provided support that was instrumental to students' development of self-regulation, and employed non-threatening evaluation practices. Consistent with previous research that characterises self-regulated learners, students in these classrooms demonstrated high levels of metacognition, intrinsic motivation, and strategic action.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: teach mini-lessons; writing study; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; teach the writing processes; motivation; metacognition; self-regulation

Perry, N.E., Drummond, L. (2002) Helping young students become self-regulated researchers and writers, *The Reading Teacher*, 56, 298–310

This article discusses how one teacher used research and writing activities to help students develop independent, academically effective approaches to reading and writing. It describes a typical writing period and considers how the teacher fostered self-regulated learning and built a community of writers. Attention is given to the importance of involving students in complex, meaningful tasks, giving students choices, giving students opportunities to control challenge, and involving students in evaluating their compositions.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation; teach mini-lessons; writing study; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; build a community of writers

Harris, K., Graham, S., Mason, L. (2006) Improving the writing, knowledge, and motivation of struggling young writers: effects of self-regulated strategy development with and without peer support, *American Educational Research Journal*, 43(2), 295–340

Writing development involves changes that occur in children's strategic behaviour, knowledge, and motivation. The authors examined the effectiveness of self-regulated strategy development (SRSD), a strategy instructional model designed to promote development in each of these areas. Instruction focused on planning and writing stories and persuasive essays. The addition of a peer support component to SRSD instruction aimed at facilitating maintenance and generalisation effects was also examined. SRSD had a positive impact on the writing performance and knowledge of struggling second-grade writers. SRSD-instructed students were more knowledgeable about writing and evidenced stronger performance in the two instructed genres (story and persuasive writing) as well as two uninstructed genres (personal narrative and informative writing).

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teach mini-lessons; self-regulated strategy instruction; read, share, think and talk about writing; self-regulation

Graham, S., Harris, K. (2000) The role of self-regulation and transcription skills in writing and writing development, *Educational Psychologist*, 35(1), 3–12

It is proposed that the development of writing competence depends on:

- high levels of self-regulation
- mastery of low-level transcription skills.

Although the available data is incomplete and many key findings require further replication, the evidence generally supports both of these propositions.

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Tags: self-regulated strategy instruction; balance composition and transcription

Zumbrunn, S., Bruning, R. (2013) Improving the writing and knowledge of emergent writers: The effects of self-regulated strategy development, *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 26(1), 91–110

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of implementing the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model of instruction on the writing skills and knowledge of six first grade students. Results indicated that SRSD can be beneficial for first grade writers. Participants wrote stories that contained

more essential components, were longer, and of better quality after SRSD instruction. Participants also showed improvement in writing knowledge from pre- to post-instruction.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: teach mini-lessons; writing study; self-regulation

Andrade, H., Brooke, G. (2010) Self-assessment and learning to write. In *Writing: Processes, Tools and Techniques*, Mertens, N. (Ed.) (pp.74–89) New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Until recently, classroom assessment literature has emphasised the role of teachers and tests, for example investigating teachers' assessment practices or the quality of classroom tests and other assessments. In contrast, current understandings of teaching and learning emphasise the role of students, as well as the complex interactions between teachers, students, and contexts. We use the literature review method to give substance to a theory of classroom assessment as the co-regulation of learning by teachers, students, instructional materials, and contexts. We organise the literature to include the self and co-regulation of learning, in order to demonstrate how classroom assessment is related to all aspects of the regulation of learning.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation; co-regulation; formative assessment; read, share, think and talk about writing; responsive teaching

Allal, L. (2019) Assessment and the co-regulation of learning in the classroom. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 27, 332–349. DOI: 10.1080/0969594X.2019.1609411.

This paper examines the processes of regulation of student learning that are associated with formative assessment in the classroom. It discusses the concept of co-regulation and presents a model of co-regulation developed in a situated perspective on classroom learning. This model conceptualises co-regulated learning as resulting from the joint influence of student self-regulation and of sources of regulation in the learning environment: namely, the structure of the teaching/learning situation, the teacher's interventions and interactions with students, the interactions between students, and the tools used for instruction and for assessment.

Examples of research showing how co-regulation functions are discussed, in particular students' use of tools for self-assessment and peer assessment, and the role of teacher–student interactions that encourage active student participation in formative assessment.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation; co-regulation; self-assessment; formative assessment; read, share, think and talk about writing; responsive teaching

Johnson, E., Hancock, C., Carter, D, Pool, J. (2012) Self-regulated strategy development as a tier 2 writing intervention, *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 48(4), 218–222

The implication of limited writing instruction suggests an immediate need for interventions to support struggling writers while at the same time addressing instructional gaps. Many schools struggle with implementing writing intervention, partly because of the limited number of evidence-based writing instructional approaches. This article documents one school's journey through the process of identifying, implementing, and evaluating outcomes of a writing intervention using self-regulated strategy development (SRSD).

(£) [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulated strategy instruction; intervention

Paris, S.G., Winograd, P. (2003) *The role of self-regulated learning in contextual teaching: Principles and practices for teacher preparation* (CIERA Report) Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/full_text/ED479905.pdf.

As teachers are pressed to extend their craft to prepare more diverse students for the challenge of work and life beyond school, they are challenged to provide more authentic instructional contexts and activities than traditional knowledge-based curricula. In order to be successful, teachers must be reflective and analytical about their own beliefs and practices and they must acquire a deep understanding of cognitive and motivational principles of learning and teaching. Toward this end, we examine how teachers can model and

promote self-regulated learning for their students. Self-regulated learning is characterised by three central features;

- awareness of thinking
- use of strategies
- situated motivation

These features of independent learning need to be experienced, constructed, and discussed among teachers so that they understand how to nurture the same development among students. Then the focus of instruction is shifted to fostering strategic and motivated students rather than delivering curricula or managing classroom behaviour.

We review 12 principles of self-regulated learning, in four general categories, that can be used by teachers in the classroom.

- Within the category of self-appraisal, we discuss how teachers can analyse their own learning styles, evaluate their own understanding, and model cognitive monitoring.
- Within the category of self-management, we discuss how teachers can promote mastery goal orientations, time and resource management, and use "failure" constructively.

We discuss how self-regulation can be taught with various tactics such as direct instruction, metacognitive discussions, modelling, and self-assessment of progress. The last several principles are discussed as ways to help students gain a sense of their personal educational histories and to shape their identities as successful students participating in a community of learners.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation strategy instruction; create a community of writers; set writing goals; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; reassuringly consistent routine; metacognition

Schneider, J. (2003) Contexts, genres, and imagination: An examination of the idiosyncratic writing performances of three elementary children within multiple contexts of writing instruction, *Research in the Teaching of English*, 37, 329–379

A year-long descriptive and interpretive study was initiated in one elementary classroom to understand further children's writing in the context of school. The case study was conducted to examine both the complex writing performances of three students and the instructional strategies of their teacher, focusing on the interplay between the children's strategy use and the teacher's instruction.

- Observations of and interviews with the children revealed the features of each child's enacted textual production, attention to textual features, and rhetorical knowledge.
- Observations of and interviews with the teacher revealed her attention to aesthetics and pragmatics and her positioning of herself as a writing authority.

Results indicate that the focus students exhibited idiosyncratic strategies for creating text and attended to multiple aspects within each writing event including the visual features of their textual products, the reactions of peers and the teacher, and the characteristics of various genres.

Throughout all writing opportunities, the children's personal experiences guided their knowledge of genre as well as their relationships in and around texts. This study contributes to theories of writing development by recasting children's writing as performance within the differing instructional contexts designed to support it.

Free access (if read online): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation strategy instruction; create a community of writers; set writing goals; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; reassuringly consistent routine

Kim, Y., Mariani, M. (2019) The Effects Of Self-regulated Learning Strategies On Preschool Children's Self-efficacy And Performance In Early Writing *International Journal of Education* 11(2):99

To enhance the will and the skills to express thoughts explicitly and effectively in early writing among preschool children, self-regulated learning (SRL) is suggested as one effective teaching approach.

This study investigated the effects of SRL strategies on early writing self-efficacy and early writing performance among preschool children. The study confirmed the effectiveness of self-regulated learning. It increased and supported children's:

- Self-efficacy
- Planning

- Goal setting
- Self-monitoring and self-evaluation
- Writing performance and writing quality

The findings of this research provide a useful insight into early writing and self-regulated learning instruction.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; motivation; self-regulation strategy instruction; self-regulation; goal setting; early writers; emergent writers

Lamme, L., Fu, D., Johnson, J., Savage, D. (2002) Helping kindergarten children move towards independence, *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 30(2), 73-79

In this journal article, two kindergarten teachers examine the strategies they use to help their students become more accomplished and independent writers. It describes the strategies used to:

- Assist children in finding topics to draw and write about
- Draw stories (ideas)
- Learn about letter-sound correspondence
- Revise their writing
- Seeking help from others
- Take risks with their writing

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation strategy instruction; self-regulation; goal setting; early writers; emergent writers; drawing; revision; encoding; co-regulation; idea generation

Hachem, A., Nabhani, M., Bahous, R. (2008) 'We can write!' The writing workshop for young learners, *Education 3-13*, 36(4), 325-337

The study presents the process of differentiated instruction, its implementation, and impact on second graders in a Lebanese school. It analyses how writing instruction has been differentiated through implementing the writing workshop to help students demonstrate improved writing skills. It examines the effects of second graders' participation in the writing workshop and discusses the factors that enabled students to develop their writing skills. Data collection includes pre- and post-writing samples, reflective journal and checklists during individual conferences. Findings show that students' writing skills improved as reflected in their progression of text, expansion of ideas, and development in conventional writing.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; writing workshop; balance composition and transcription; be reassuring consistent

Kim, Y., Yang, D., Reyes, M., Connor, C. (2021) Writing instruction improves students' writing skills differentially depending on focal instruction and children: A meta-analysis for primary grade students, *Educational Research Review*, (34) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2021.100408>

We investigated the effect of writing interventions on written composition for students in primary grades with a focus on whether effects vary as a function of different dimensions of composition outcomes (quality, productivity, fluency), instructional focus (transcription, self-regulation strategies), and student characteristics (initially weak writing skills).

Self-regulation strategy instruction has a large and consistent positive effect across the outcomes whereas transcription instruction did not yield statistically significant effects on any dimensions of composition due to large variation of effects across studies. Lastly, the average effect on writing quality was larger for writers with weaker writing skills compared to those with typical skills.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation; self-regulation strategy instruction; mini-lessons; fluency

Children's literate development is mediated by classroom talk. That same talk also mediates children's emotional, relational, self-regulatory, and moral development. Consequently, the discourse of some literacy teaching practices may be important for shaping the course of human development, and those dimensions of human development can play reciprocal roles in children's literate development.

For example, conversations about the inner life of book characters (and authors) expand children's social imaginations, which improve their self-regulation, social relationships, and moral development.

Coincidentally, literacy learning requires cognitive self-regulation (working memory, attention, focus), social self-regulation in interactions with peers and teachers, and emotional self-regulation (frustration and anxiety).

Children who develop self-regulation earlier, and to higher levels, develop decoding and reading comprehension earlier. Similarly, when children's conversations explore the pragmatics of their linguistic interactions, such as how to disagree productively, they become more able to comprehend texts and argue persuasively but also more able to learn from and with each other.

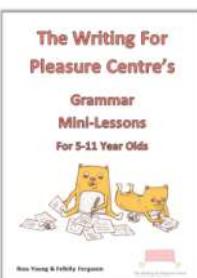
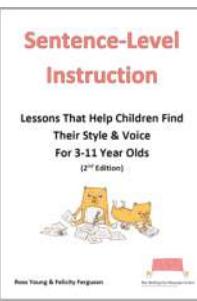
Children need to acquire "the codes," but the ecology of acquisition matters a great deal not only for the ease of acquisition but also for the nature of the literacy that is acquired and for the trajectory of human development.

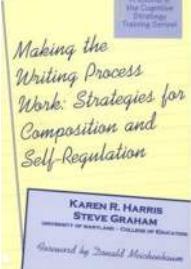
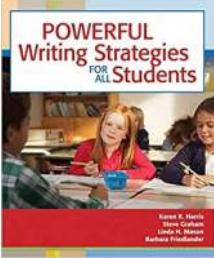
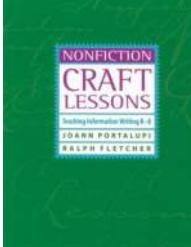
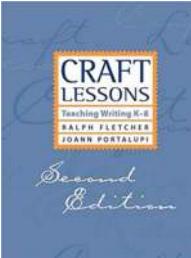
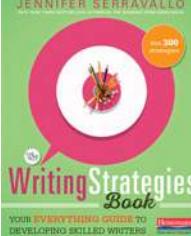
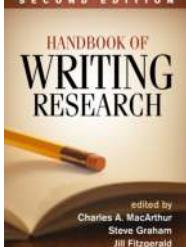
Children's social and emotional development lies squarely in the bailiwick of the language arts and the literate talk within which they are immersed. But the accompanying human development, in turn, supports literate development.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation; motivation; volition; agency; self-efficacy; funds of identity; create a community of writers; read, share, think and talk about writing; pupil conference; self-regulation strategy instruction; connect reading and writing

Recommended chapters and literature

 The Writing For Pleasure Centre's Big Book Of Writing Mini-Lessons. Lessons That Teach Powerful Craft Knowledge For 3-11 Year Olds. Rose Young, Felicity Ferguson, Tashen Hayden & Marcella Vasques. The Writing For Pleasure Centre.	Young, R., Ferguson, F., Hayden, T., Vasques, M. (2021) <i>The Writing For Pleasure Centre's BIG Book Of Mini-Lessons: Lessons That Teach Powerful Craft Knowledge For 3-11 Year Olds</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]
 The Writing For Pleasure Centre's Grammar Mini-Lessons. For 5-11 Year Olds. Rose Young & Felicity Ferguson. The Writing For Pleasure Centre.	Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2022) <i>The Writing For Pleasure Centre's Grammar Mini-Lessons</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure [LINK]
 The Writing For Pleasure Centre's Sentence-Level Instruction. Lessons That Help Children Find Their Style & Voice For 3-11 Year Olds (2nd Edition). Rose Young & Felicity Ferguson. The Writing For Pleasure Centre.	Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2023) <i>The Writing For Pleasure Centre's Sentence-Level Instruction</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure [LINK]

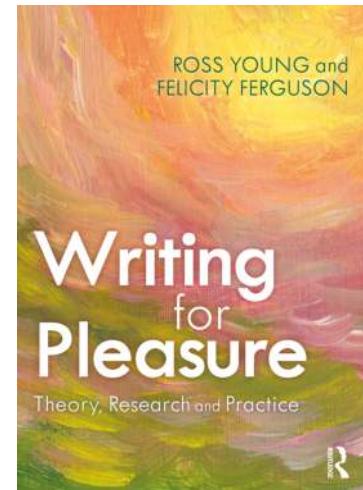
	<p>Harris, K., Graham, S. (1999). <i>Making the Writing Process Work: Strategies for Composition and Self-Regulation</i> New York: Brookline Books</p>
	<p>Harris, K., Graham, S., Mason, L. (2008). <i>Powerful Writing Strategies For All Students</i> Baltimore: Brookes Publishing</p>
	<p>Fletcher, R., and Portalupi, J. (2001). <i>Non-Fiction Craft Lessons: Teaching Information Writing K-8</i>. New York: Stenhouse</p>
	<p>Fletcher, R., and Portalupi, J. (2007). <i>Craft Lessons: Teaching Writing K-8 (2nd Ed.)</i>. New York: Stenhouse</p>
	<p>Serravallo, J. (2017). <i>The Writing Strategies Book</i>. Portsmouth NH: Heineman</p>
	<p>MacArthur, C., and Graham, S. (2017). Writing research from a cognitive perspective. In <i>Handbook of Writing Research</i>, MacArthur, C., Graham, S., and Fitzgerald, J. (Ed.) (2nd Ed.) (pp. 24–40). London: Guildford Press.</p>

Chapter 5

Agency (Ownership & Personal Responsibility)

Introduction

This chapter discusses the affective domain agency, which can also be described as personal control, epistemic agency, personal and collective responsibility, or agentic learning, and is, in the context of writing, about having choice, freedom, autonomy, and ownership of writing ideas, writing processes, and even how you are taught. Agency is a vital force in increasing writers' engagement and their writing performance. Theory, research, and educational practices associated with developing children's agency in writing and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are explored within this chapter. This includes discussion of the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers who are provided with high and low levels of agency. Finally, the authors describe the relationship between developing apprentice writers' agency and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching. They give examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.



[DOWNLOAD CHAPTER](#)

Young, R., Ramdarshan-Bold, M., Clark, C., and McGeown, S. (2025) 'It's healthy. It's good for you': Children's perspectives on utilising their autonomy in the writing classroom. *Literacy*, 59: 372–384.

This research study investigates how pupil autonomy affects the writing motivation of primary school children in England, specifically using self-determination theory as a framework.

By interviewing students aged 9–11, the authors identified three distinct pedagogical environments: teacher-controlled, student-controlled, and collaboratively-controlled writing.

While some pupils find comfort in rigid teacher guidance, many report that a lack of choice leads to disengagement and a sense of disconnection from their writing. Conversely, students often feel more passionate and confident when they are permitted to select their own topics and manage their own creative processes.

The findings suggest that a balanced approach, where teachers and students share decision-making power, is the most effective way to address declining enjoyment in writing. Ultimately, the study advocates for autonomy-supportive practices to help children develop into more competent, self-determined writers.

The following is a list of implications for practice:

- **Adopting a centralist or collaborative approach:** Educators should move towards 'collaboratively-controlled writing', where teachers and children share responsibility for the project. This balance provides the necessary guidance and instruction while allowing for personal decision-making and expression.
- **Providing a comprehensive writerly apprenticeship:** Teachers should pay close attention to the motivational needs of writers by fostering intrinsic motivation and autonomy throughout the entire writing process.
- **Establishing publishing goals:** Students should be invited to help conceptualise projects by choosing the purposes and audiences for their writing. Knowing who they are writing for and why can significantly fuel their motivation.
- **Co-constructing product goals:** Rather than using predefined success criteria, teachers should invite children to contribute to the development of rubrics and product goals. This allows children to help define what competency looks like, making the work feel more meaningful.
- **Supporting autonomous idea generation:** For students who find choosing a topic overwhelming, teachers should provide explicit instruction and feedback on idea-generation techniques. This includes drawing on external inspirations such as peers, popular culture, books, and videogames.
- **Granting autonomy over the writing process:** Children should have the freedom to manage their own production strategies and drafting styles. This includes choosing when to proofread or deciding between styles such as being a 'discoverer' (developing ideas through the act of writing) or a 'sentence stacker' (revising sentence by sentence).
- **Sufficiently scaffolding autonomy:** It is crucial that autonomy-supportive practices are properly scaffolded to ensure students have positive experiences and do not feel overwhelmed by too many choices.

- **Utilising 'funds of identity':** Practice should allow students to draw on their personal knowledge, interests, and passions. This leads to writing that is not only academically successful but also socially and personally meaningful to the child.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; community and environmental orientation; writing workshop; autonomy-supportive practices; collaboratively-controlled writing

McCarthey, S.J., Vu, N., & Zhang, J. (2024) Children's agency through writing in elementary classrooms. *Early Childhood Educ J.* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-024-01734-5>

This research investigates how elementary students demonstrate individual agency through writing within a Reggio-Emilia-inspired school. By observing three different age groups, the authors illustrate how flexible curricula allow children to incorporate their personal identities, out-of-school lives, and multilingual skills into their work. The study highlights that student autonomy thrives when teachers provide choices regarding topics and collaboration rather than utilising rigid, scripted prompts. While younger children exercised agency through imaginative storytelling and peer negotiation, older students showed a marked preference for poetry over structured opinion tasks because it offered greater self-expression.

Ultimately, the paper argues that writing instruction should be relational and situated in students' real-world experiences to foster engagement. These findings suggest that moving beyond skill-based drills is essential for developing a child's unique voice and writerly identity.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; funds-of-knowledge; writing realities; funds-of-identity; writer-identity; authorial control; autonomy; generating writing ideas; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; communicative environmental orientation; presentational skills orientation

DeCoursey, K. (2023). *Making Space for Student Agency: A Multilayered Exploration of Agency and Writing in a First-Grade Classroom*. Graduate Theses and Dissertation. 8828. <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/8828>

Early literacy learning is crucial for later success in reading and writing. We have a limited understanding of generative writing (i.e., expressing ideas in writing) in first grade and further research is warranted. The socially situated nature of writing justifies a study of student agency during writing.

In this study, data were collected before, during, and after 10 writing sessions in a first-grade classroom. Students took a pre- and post-survey that revealed their self-perceptions of their agency and confidence as literacy learners. The participating teacher was interviewed three times and the teacher's talk was recorded during all 45- to 60- minute writing sessions.

Results showed that opportunities for students to choose and exercise agency arose when the teacher asked open-ended questions and gave encouragement to students that prompted them to act. When students' made choices about what and how they wrote, they seemed empowered and to grow as individual writers.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; community and environmental orientation; writing workshop

Barnes, J. (2020). Promoting student agency in writing. *The Reading Teacher*, 73(6), 789-795.

With increasing expectations on students regarding written communication, the promotion of student agency in writing is more important now than ever. Teachers must find ways to engage and empower all learners throughout the writing process so they can produce authentic and meaningful writing independently. To promote such agency, educators must allow students to do more of the work, even while scaffolding for students who need more support. Supporting students in ways that promote metacognition, using their own voice and ideas, pinpointing their individual needs, and encouraging student leadership throughout the writing process kindle students' capacity and inclination to take initiative for their own achievement. The author presents strategies that teachers can use to promote student metacognition and agency during the writing processes while allowing students to keep their own writing identity and build independence.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; planning; metacognition

Atwell, N. (1985) Everyone sits at a big desk: Discovering topics for writing, *The English Journal*, 74(5), pp.35-39

In this article, Nancie Atwell highlights the issues surrounding teacher-imposed writing topics. She shares how under such a pedagogy writing becomes 'artificial' and children fail to receive a complete writerly apprenticeship. In contrast, Atwell argues that when children are taught and given agency over their own writing topics, they can flourish.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; writing workshop

McKnight, L. (2020) Teaching writing by formula: empowerment or exclusion?, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, pp.1-15.

The teaching of writing in secondary English subjects in Australia, as in other countries including England and the United States, has become increasingly formulaic. Pedagogies including direct instruction, modelling, scaffolding, and genre-based approaches involve the implementation of formulas for writing sentences, paragraphs, and entire essays; this has taken place in the neoliberal context of tightly proscribed, high stakes testing regimes that often demand the reproduction of these formulas. This article considers affordances and constraints for inclusion of this process. It then presents findings of a small-scale qualitative study into the teaching of writing in Victoria that asked teachers about pedagogies for the teaching of writing, and how students were faring as a result. In conclusion, the article offers recommendations for inclusive practice in the teaching of writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Rylak, D., Moses, L., Torrejón Capurro, C., & Serafini, F. (2022) Agency in a first-grade writing workshop: A case study of two composers, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 14687984221097285.

There is a need to better understand the agentic choices that students make to communicate meaning through their multimodal compositions. This article examines the composing of two first-grade students and discusses how these students utilised multimodal composing techniques from structured writing units during an "open unit" where students were given wider parameters for making intentional decisions with their compositions.

Analysis of students' compositions revealed that students chose to use and design composing techniques from the previous focal units in their compositions. Findings suggest that focal writing units, followed by open composing, allows students to have more agency as writers to make creative intertextual connections as they design techniques from available designs they've learned in order to serve their own compositional needs.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; pursue personal writing projects; mentor texts; textual instruction; genre study

Aitken, A.A., Graham, S., McNeish, D. (2022) The effects of choice versus preference on writing and the mediating role of perceived competence, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 114(8), p.1844

There is an assumption in education that providing students choice in their writing tasks leads to better writing outcomes; however, there are few studies to support this belief. In this study, we examined the effects of choice (choosing the position on an argumentative essay) and preference (receiving one's preferred position through choosing or chance) on writing quality with college students. Results indicated that choice at the first time point, when mediated by perceived competence, resulted in higher writing quality on their essay at time 2. There were no significant effects for preference.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; self-efficacy; motivation

Carroll, S., & Feng, J. (2010). Writer's workshop vs. writing prompts: The effect on first graders' writing ability and attitude towards writing, *Teacher as Researcher: Action Research by Elementary Teachers*, 160.

This action research attempted to determine if Writer's Workshop and the use of writing prompts have different effects on first graders' writing ability and attitudes. Eighteen students (N=18) in a first grade class were randomly split into two groups, and during a 5-week period each group was taught writing in a different method. One group received instruction on writing a persuasive paper using a prompt, and another received instruction on writing a persuasive paper with a free-choice of topic. The students were then assessed on their writing ability and attitude towards writing at the end of instruction. A series of t-tests and item analysis was conducted to compare writing ability and attitude between the two groups. The results showed that both Group A (prompted) and Group B (free-choice) experienced a decline in overall attitude about writing over the course of the study. Group A (prompted), however, experienced more of a decline than Group B (free-choice). It appears that students get slightly more enjoyment out of choosing their topic than being told what to write. The overall scores on the final persuasive writing showed that students taught using a prompt scored better than those with free-choice. The only subcategory where Group B (free-choice) scored higher than Group A (prompted) was in conventions. It also shows that students who write better enjoy the writing process more.

Overall, the scores on the Writing Assessment were better from those students receiving a prompt. When students are given the freedom to write what they choose, they have a more positive attitude towards writing. This study indicates that free choice writing and prompted writing both have a place in the classroom. In order to teach a specific type of writing (i.e. persuasive, narrative, informational) students need prompts and clear instructions. However, if we are to foster a life-long love of writing, classroom teachers need to set aside time for students to write what they want to write about and share with others.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; writing prompts; motivation; writer-identity

Jaeger, E. (2021) Friends and authors: Spontaneous co-composing in a writing workshop, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 21(2), 177-207

In the mid-1980s, researchers began to study writers working in collaboration. Much of this research attended to what might be termed side-by-side composing: authors working on their own individual pieces and discussing them with others as needed. Others have studied co-composing—that is, multiple authors crafting a single text—describing the various aspects of these collaborations and their constraints and affordances. Nevertheless, few of these researchers have examined settings in which children spontaneously undertake co-composing. The study described here is a case analysis of a group of third-grade boys who chose to work together to write a superhero story over a period of six weeks.

Analysis showed that both the students' interaction and the text that resulted from it was multi-voiced in nature. I argue here for a Writing Workshop model that foregrounds student choice and agency, rather than asserting that procedures are the primary drivers of success. In the context described here, such a model allowed students in this classroom to follow their own interests and work with peers who were supportive of those interests.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; co-authoring; co-construction; read, share, think and talking about writing; pupil-conferencing; pursue personal writing projects

Yoon, H. S. (2021) Stars, rainbows, and Michael Myers: The carnivalesque intersection of play and horror in kindergarteners'(trade) marking and (copy) writing, *Teachers College Record*, 123(3), 1-22

Research on children's play asserts that children's identities are performed and (re)formed in peer groups where they try out identities and make sense of their social worlds. Yet there are kinds of play (e.g., violence, gore, sexuality, and consumer culture) that are often hidden and taken underground, deemed inappropriate for public spaces. These underground spaces are potentially revolutionary (#playrevolution) as children disrupt power hierarchies and regulatory boundaries in both subtle and overt ways. These spaces are important for children who are consistently marginalised by intersecting identities, further complicated by negative perceptions attached to certain topics constituting dark play. Thus, what if we look beyond labelling certain play episodes "inappropriate" and consider how children produce and enact culture? What seems nonsensical and irrational to the adult gaze is about creative participation, agency, and autonomy for children.

Results in this study showed how children actively took up tools and ideas from horror story genres (e.g., chainsaws, blood, and masks), while their local context served as the setting for their own stories: the nearby high school, Halloween parties, and popular costumes. They remixed stories to include curricular demands (e.g., true stories) with popular culture interests. However, they did not reveal these seemingly "inappropriate" topics to their teacher and the demands of school literacy. Their resulting written stories were not pictures of

chainsaws, bloody deaths, and killer dolls: They were “masked” by attempts at writing letters underneath pictures of houses, trees, cars, rainbows, and people. Arguably, the children knew how to navigate the official space of school, understanding which ideas were appropriate for their secret conversations and which were appropriate for public sharing. In the midst of their play, children learned how to write from one another: Certain words were borrowed across the table, pictures (e.g., rainbows) symbolised common practices, and storylines were “copied” and reappropriated from others. These literacy attempts were trademarked and encoded on their written texts to signify belonging and participation at the intersection of popular culture and play.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; writer-identity; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; writing realities; read, share, think and talking about writing; pursue personal writing projects; early writers; early writing

Land, C. L. (2022) Recentering purpose and audience as part of a critical, humanising approach to writing instruction, *Reading Research Quarterly*, 57(1), 37-58

This study addressed tensions faced by teachers in balancing the types of writing valued in today’s schools, the needs of today’s writers beyond school, and the rich cultural and linguistic resources that students bring into today’s classrooms.

New understandings illuminated in this article highlight how one teacher drew on purpose and audience, as (re)defined tools for writing, to recognize and value her students’ capabilities and to support them as agentive designers of texts. To examine these possibilities for repositioning students and approaching writing instruction from a critical, humanizing perspective, I describe this teacher’s shift from beginning with genre to beginning with purpose and audience and draw attention to the teacher’s and students’ use of these tools for guiding their decision making across multiple writing situations in a school year.

(£) [LINK](#)

Tags: pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; perspective taking; theory of mind; inference; genre study; generating ideas; agency; writer-identity; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity;

Vaughn, M., Jang, B. G., Sotirovska, V., & Cooper-Novack, G. (2020). Student agency in literacy: A systematic review of the literature, *Reading Psychology*, 41(7), 712-734

Scholars contend that agency is at the heart of cultivating equitable learning spaces for all learners. While it is intuitive that literacy educators support agency during instruction, there is diverse terminology surrounding the concept of agency in the field. As a result, aligning the construct to instructional practices and developing a conceptual understanding of agency in practice has been challenging. Our research team completed a systematic literature review of agency during literacy instruction. In this article, we describe findings of this review of empirical research on agency in literacy spanning from 1975–2017. Findings highlight the complexities associated with defining agency as well as the need for diverse methodological approaches to examining agency in literacy contexts.

(£) [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; create a community of writers’ writer-identity; initial teacher education; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Bonyadi, A. (2014) The effect of topic selection on EFL students’ writing performance, *Sage Open*, 4(3), 2158244014547176

This study aimed to measure the effect of topic selection on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students’ writing performance. Findings of the study indicated a significant difference in the performance of the students who wrote on their self-selected topics and for those who wrote on a teacher-assigned topic. The magnitude of the difference was large.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; multilingual; bilingual; English as an additional language; writer-identity

Schrodt, K., Barksdale, B., & Fields, R. S. (2022) Self-Directed Kindergarten Writers, *Texas Journal of Literacy Education*, 9(2), 12-29

This article seeks to empower teachers to create a literacy environment in which children begin to identify as writers: confident, willing to take risks, engaged, excited, persistent, resilient, resourceful, and self-starting. The teaching methods provided in the article are centred around the writer's workshop model, applied in a Kindergarten classroom in the mid-South, where the focus is on independent writing time and not task completion. Writing was viewed as a time to dive deeper into creating meaningful messages, work on writing craft, and set goals as a writer. The methods discussed in the article can foster an environment where young children can become self-directed writers, and nurturing within them the confidence to share their stories with the world.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be reassuringly consistent; writer's workshop; mini-lesson; self-regulation strategy development instruction; direct instruction; class sharing; Author's chair; set writing goals; agency; writer identity; self-regulation; generating ideas; balance composition and transcription; book-making; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Schrodt, K. E., Elleman, A. M., FitzPatrick, E. R., Hasty, M. M., Kim, J. K., Tharp, T. J., & Rector, H. (2019) An examination of mindset instruction, self-regulation, and writer's workshop on kindergarteners' writing performance and motivation: A mixed-methods study, *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 35(5), 427-444

This study used qualitative and quantitative data collected simultaneously, analysed separately, and merged for an overarching interpretation. Kindergarten students ($n = 27$) were randomly assigned to either a control condition of Writer's Workshop or an experimental condition that featured collaboration, student choice, structured self-regulated strategy instruction, and mindset training embedded in the Writer's Workshop framework. Results indicated significant growth for both basic and conceptual writing. Students in the experimental group significantly increased motivation and perseverance for difficult writing tasks. Results indicate that adding mindset and self-regulation strategy instruction to the Writer's Workshop framework may improve motivation and independence in young writers.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: be reassuringly consistent; early writers; emergent writing; early years; writer's workshop; mini-lesson; self-regulation strategy development instruction; direct instruction; mindset instruction; motivation; agency; collaboration; read, share think and talking about writing; set writing goals

Graves, D. (1982) Break the welfare cycle: Let writers choose their topics, *The English Composition Board*, 3(2), 75–78.

In this article, Donald Graves highlights the issues surrounding teacher-imposed writing topics. He shares how under such a pedagogy writing becomes 'artificial' and children fail to receive a complete writerly apprenticeship. In contrast, Graves argues that when children are taught and given agency over their own writing topics, they can flourish.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; writing workshop

Ray, K., (2004) Why Cauley Writes Well: A Close Look at What a Difference Good Teaching Can Make, *Language Arts*, 82(2) pp.100-109

Cauley's books about snakes demonstrate intentional and interesting decisions by a beginning writer. The conclusion states that learning to choose topics for writing in thoughtful ways is an important part of the curriculum in writing workshop.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; writing workshop; creating a community of writers; purposeful and authentic writing projects; set writing goals; connect reading and writing

Kissel, B., Miller, E. (2015) Reclaiming power in the writers' workshop: defending curricula countering narratives, and changing identities in prekindergarten classrooms, *The Reading Teacher*, 69(1) pp.77-86

In this article, Kissel & Miller examine how young writers and their teachers transformed their writing curriculum by using the writer's workshop approach. They present three narratives in which multiple pre-kindergarten teachers used their power within the Writer's Workshop to:

- Ensure writing was a daily practice in pre-kindergarten classrooms
- Write about stories often censored in early childhood classrooms
- Claim new writing identities

The two classrooms they describe used similar pedagogical structures to teach writing following the decades-old traditions of Writer's Workshop; however, they found that what happened within those traditions—among children, teachers, and school administrators—transformed contemporary practices of literacy education. All three stories share a common thread; when positioned within the structure of a Writer's Workshop, young authors and their teachers claim power and, ultimately, assert their voices.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; writer identity; be reassuringly consistent; writing workshop; creating a community of writers; purposeful and authentic writing projects; early writers; emergent writers

Lamme, L., Fu, D., Johnson, J., Savage, D. (2002) Helping kindergarten children move towards independence, *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 30(2), 73-79.

In this journal article, two kindergarten teachers examine the strategies they use to help their students become more accomplished and independent writers. It describes the strategies used to:

- Assist children in finding topics to draw and write about
- Draw stories (ideas)
- Learn about letter-sound correspondence
- Revise their writing
- Seeking help from others
- Take risks with their writing

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: self-regulation strategy instruction; self-regulation; goal setting; early writers; emergent writers; drawing; revision; encoding; co-regulation; idea generation

Rowe, D., Neitzel, C. (2010) Interest and Agency in 2- and 3-Year-Olds' Participation in Emergent Writing, *Reading Research Quarterly*, 45(2) pp.169-195

This study investigated 2-3-year-olds' personal interests as a possible source of variation in preschool writing activities. Structured observations of the play behaviours of 11 preschool children in a childcare classroom were conducted one to two days per week for one school year. Findings indicated that patterns in the preschoolers' profiles of play behaviours reflected conceptual, procedural, creative, or socially oriented interests and that their personal interest orientations were related to ways they participated in emergent writing activities.

- Children with conceptual interests used writing to explore and record ideas on topics of personal interest.
- Children with procedural interests explored how writing worked and practiced conventional literacy (e.g., writing alphabet letters).
- Children with creative interests explored writing materials to generate new literacy processes and new uses for materials.
- Children with socially oriented interests used writing to mediate joint social interaction and aligned their activity choices with those of other participants.

These findings suggest that children's personal interests help shape their transactions with people, materials, and activities, resulting in different profiles of early writing experiences.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: early writers; emergent writers; writing realities; read, share, think and talk about writing; agency; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; drawing; multimodality; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; personal writing projects; writing centres

Dennis, L., Votteler, N. (2012) Preschool Teachers and Children's Emergent Writing: Supporting Diverse Learners, *Early Childhood Education*, 41: 439-446

Early literacy skill development is critical at the preschool years. Under that umbrella is emergent writing, a small but important component of overall literacy development. This article presents two writing strategies, writer's workshop and dictation within the context of storybook reading, that preschool teachers can utilise to target emergent writing development. Suggestions for modifications for diverse learners are provided without, as well as discussion on how to get parents involved in working with their children on early writing within the home environment.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: early writers; emergent writers; writing workshop; personal writing projects; funds of identity; funds of knowledge; home literacy practices; set writing goals

Edmister, E., Staples, A., Huber, B., Walz Garrett, J. (2013) Creating Writing Opportunities for Young Children, *Young Exceptional Children*, 16(3) pp.24-35

This article describes an authentic, social, inclusive writing activity for young children (preschool to second grade) with and without disabilities engaged in what the second and third authors called "Big Paper."

In addition to detailing the activity, recommendations for maximising the participation of all students and monitoring student progress are provided.

It concludes that examination of "Big Paper" revealed children attending to and engaging in the activity by exploring writing, storytelling, and multiple modes of communication. Children with significant developmental disabilities demonstrated sophisticated thinking and composing behaviour that made clear their increasing understanding of and facility with the purposes of written communication. Also, although "Big Paper" is not a writing program in and of itself, it may be useful to teachers questioning how to introduce writing as well as a relevant addition to classrooms with strong writing programs already in place.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: early writers; emergent writers; treat every child as a writer; SEND; read, share, think and talk about writing; agency; drawing

Harvey-Torres, R., Valdez, C. (2021) Nadie más puede contar tu historia: Rewriting Whose Stories Matter through an Antiracist Bilingual Writer's Workshop, *Language Arts*, 99 (1), pp.37-47

Teachers should love students, their languages, and their cultures

According to Harvey-Torres & Valdez, writing curricula and schemes of work often mirror the white, monolingual, middle-class experiences of the teachers or providers who write them. As a consequence, students from non-dominant backgrounds can often be positioned as deficient. Thankfully, Ms. Valdez, a first grade (6-7 year olds) teacher, shows how this need not be the case. She uses a personally relevant 'writing workshop' approach to help her bilingual students write. By inviting children to use their home languages, and to write about what they know best, their lives, Ms. Valdez was able to value children's linguistic, racial, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds, and, in the process, teach them much about writing and being a writer. The article shares how Ms. Valdez and her students were able to use writing as a tool for positioning oneself in the world and *righting* any wrongs and assumptions people might have about your reality and identity. Ms. Valdez:

- Delivered her daily writing instruction in both English and Spanish.
- Chose mentor texts which reflected her students' races, cultural backgrounds and experiences.
- Undertook 'picture walks' with her class using bilingual picture books.
- Invited children to choose their own topics to write about within the parameters of whole-class writing projects.
- Asked children to teach the rest of the class about their home language through their writings, drawings and picture book making.
- Invited children to write letters to people they care about.
- Positively compared her students' writing with commercially published authors. Children's writing held the same status and regard.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writing workshop; agency; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; English language learners; English as an additional language; translanguaging; multilingualism; culturally sustaining pedagogy; genre study; drawing; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Behizadeh, N. (2014). Xavier's take on authentic writing: Structuring choices for expression and impact, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 58(4), 289–298

Because authenticity in education is a subjective judgement regarding the meaningfulness of an activity, a need exists to co-investigate with students classroom factors increasing authenticity of writing. In this case study, one 8th grade student's needs for authentic writing are explored in detail.

Xavier's take on authentic writing illustrates how the factors of impact, choice, expression, and sharing connect in a unique way for this particular individual on specific writing tasks.

Also, by examining in depth Xavier's individual perspective, one can see how Xavier's views align with and differ from previous research on authentic writing. Additionally, this article offers a conversation between the author and Xavier, depicting a method for structuring students' choices to increase authenticity. The study contributes to the existing literature by illustrating how authenticity depends on the values and life experiences students bring to the writing task, not the inherent value of the task itself.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Behizadeh, N. (2018) Aiming for authenticity: Successes and struggles of an attempt to increase authenticity in writing, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 62(4), 411–419

In this study, the author and a classroom teacher designed a curriculum that sought to help students choose a valued topic, emphasise meaning making while developing writing skills and strategies, and have an impact on an audience. Students were also provided with opportunities to share in-process and final work with others. Curricular attempts to enact these proposed factors of authentic writing in a personal narrative project are detailed, along with successes and struggles with implementing each factor. Findings highlight the importance of students writing for an actual, intended audience instead of an imagined one. Additionally, the author discusses how social justice education may provide a unifying curricular framework that strengthens students' sense of audience and purpose.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; read, share, think and talk about writing

Laman, T., Davis, T., Henderson, J., (2018) "My Hair has a Lot of Stories!": Unpacking Culturally Sustaining Writing Pedagogies in an Elementary Mediated Field Experience for Teacher Candidates, *Action in Teacher Education*, 40:4, 374–390

In this research study, teacher candidates learnt 'what is possible rather than what is typical' in an economically-deprived urban school. The teachers were able to reflect on their own deficit perspectives and assumptions about race, class, and the lives of children and their families within the local school community. By the end of the study, the pre-service teachers felt better able to identify and encourage children to use their own existing social, cultural and linguistic resources.

As part of the study, a class of 7-8 year old majority African-American children were invited to write in personal response to the book *Hair Dance* by Dinah Johnson. The children were able to quickly identify themselves and their local community within the pages of the book. Children used intertextuality to connect the book's theme to their own identities, cultures and lives. For example, some boys wrote about visits to the local barbershop, whilst many girls considered the ritual of having their hair did by aunts, grandmothers and mothers.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; genre study; read, share, think and talk about writing

In this longitudinal study, the researchers observed two 8-9 year old multilingual classrooms where a contemporary writing workshop approach was used. The teachers created a learning environment that was responsive and personally relevant and which enabled learners from many parts of the world, including: Mexico, Honduras, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Korea, to share about their lives, beliefs and interests. The teachers provided children with a writer's notebook and they were afforded daily time in which to talk with others and write in them. The writing produced included traditional narrative, expository texts, persuasive texts, collaborative writing, scripts and song lyrics. The children wrote on topics like:

- past friendships
- working with parents to prepare their walls for painting
- going to mosque
- learning stories of the prophets
- expert lists
- family journeys from one country to another
- sibling rivalries

The teachers' subtractive views were challenged by the project and they came to understand that children's funds of knowledge and identity were not only an invaluable cognitive writing resource but were also able to make a rich contribution to the learning of others in the classroom and local community. This included putting on a 'Author's Celebration' event for family and friends within the local community.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; read, share, think and talk about writing; English language learners; English as an additional language; translanguaging; multilingualism

Harmey, S. (2020) Co-constructing writing: handing over the reins to young authors. *Education 3-13*, 3-11.

Learning to write is a complex process and children have to orchestrate a range of processes and skills in order to produce written messages. Young children are facing increasing demands in terms of the expected complexity of their written messages in education settings across the world. Teachers, in turn, are challenged to support children and guide them towards independence in writing.

This article explores the complexity of writing and, drawing on a study that describes the implementation of an observation as an assessment framework for supporting writing, practical research-based strategies are provided to leverage observation as a form of assessment and how to support children to organise their own composition of messages.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; generating ideas; planning; balance composition and transcription

Purcell-Gates, V., Duke, N., and Martineau, J. (2007) Learning to read and write genre-specific text: Roles of authentic experience and explicit teaching, *Reading Research Quarterly*, 42(1), 8-45

This study explored the role of authentic writing and the explicit explanation of genre function and features on growth in genre-specific reading and writing abilities of children in grades two and three.

Results showed a strong relationship between the degree of authenticity of reading and writing activities and writing quality. Children from homes with lower levels of parental education grew at the same rate as those from homes with higher levels. These results add to the growing empirical evidence regarding the efficacy of involving students in reading and writing for real-life purposes in the classroom.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; generating ideas; genre study; connect reading and writing; genre study

Zumbrunn, S., Krause, K. (2012) Conversations with leaders: Principles of effective writing instruction, *The Reading Teacher*, 65(5), 346–353

Findings from research demonstrate that student writing proficiency and classroom writing instruction is a national concern. This qualitative study explored principles of effective writing instruction through the perspectives of leading authorities in the field of writing. Five major themes of effective writing instruction emerged:

- Effective writing instructors realise the impact of their own writing beliefs, experiences, and practices;
- Effective writing instruction encourages student motivation and engagement;
- Effective writing instruction begins with clear and deliberate planning, but is also flexible;
- Effective writing instruction and practice happens every day;
- Effective writing instruction is a scaffolded collaboration between teachers and students.

This article summarises recommendations for best practices in the writing classroom.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; motivation; be reassuring consistent; planning; read, share, think and talk about writing; be a writer-teacher; teach daily mini-lessons; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Helsel, L., Kelly, K., Wong, K. (2021) Responsive Teaching in the Writer's Workshop, *The Reading Teacher*, doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2074

This article shares how a class of 8-9 year olds became a community of independent and collaborative writers who flourish through a responsive and culturally sustaining approach to writers' workshop. This includes:

- Providing daily and dedicated time for writing
- Honouring children's writing choices
- Providing daily writing instruction which is responsive to what the class needs instruction in most.
- Providing children with additional instruction and feedback through pupil conferences

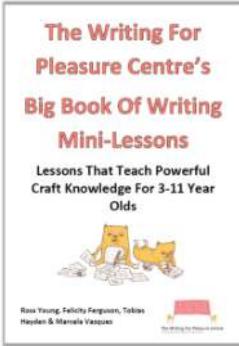
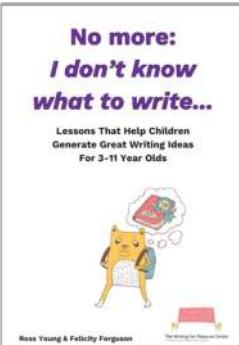
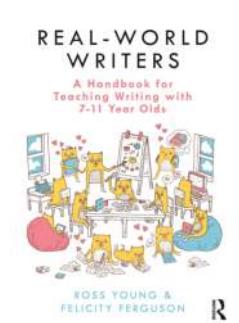
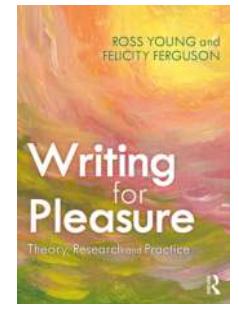
The authors then share the four ways in which teachers can be responsive to the needs of their students. These include:

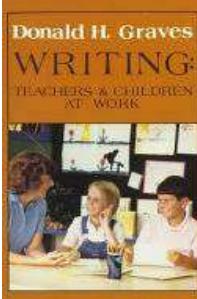
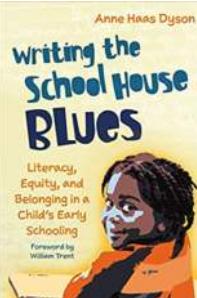
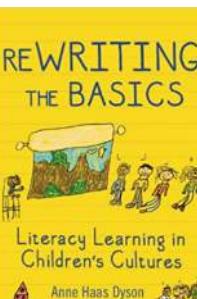
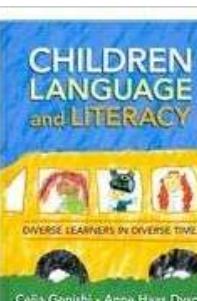
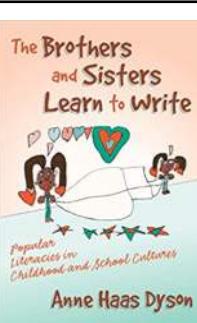
- **Academic responsiveness:** Ensuring that skills and content align with students' abilities and curriculum goals.
- **Linguistic responsiveness:** Valuing the languages and dialects of students.
- **Cultural responsiveness:** Valuing the social and cultural identities and cultural capital of students.
- **Social-emotional responsiveness:** Providing a safe and loving environment for children to take risks, write and be writers.

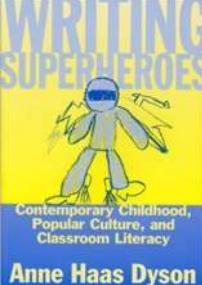
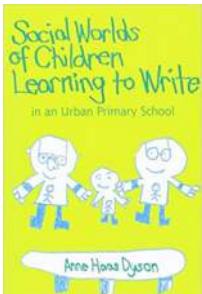
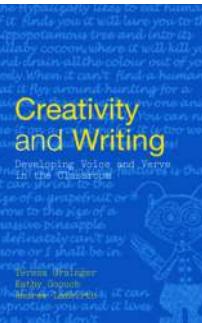
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Tags: read, share, think and talk about writing; treat every child as a writer; building a community of writers; pupil conferencing; culturally sustaining pedagogy; responsive teaching; writing instruction; writing workshop; linguistics; agency mini-lesson; be reassuringly consistent; writer-identity; motivation; translanguaging; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Recommended chapters and literature

	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F., Hayden, T., Vasques, M. (2021) The Writing For Pleasure Centre's BIG Book Of Mini-Lessons: Lessons That Teach Powerful Craft Knowledge For 3-11 Year Olds [LINK]</p>
	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2022) <i>No More: I Don't Know What To Write... Lessons That Help Children Generate Great Writing Ideas</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]</p>
	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2020) <i>Real World Writers: A Handbook For Teaching Writing With 7-11 Year Olds</i> London: Routledge [LINK]</p>
	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2021) 'Volition' In <i>Writing For Pleasure</i> London: Routledge LINK</p> <p>This chapter discusses the affective domain volition, which is defined as the need, desire, urge, or the internal compulsion to write, sometimes described as purposive striving or personal endorsement. The authors present evidence which shows how engagement of volition stimulates apprentice writers' desire to harness the knowledge and skills necessary for the creation of excellent written texts. Theory, research, and educational practices associated with developing children's volition to write and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are also explored in this chapter. Consideration is given to the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers who feel high or low levels of volition. Finally, the authors describe the relationship between apprentice writers' volition to write and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching. Included are examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.</p>

	<p>Gaves, D. (1983). <i>Writing: Teachers and Children at Work</i>. Exeter, NH: Heinemann.</p>
	<p>Dyson, A.H. (2021). <i>Writing the School House Blues: Literacy, Equity, and Belonging in a Child's Early Schooling</i>. New York:Teachers College Press.</p>
	<p>Dyson, A.H. (2013). <i>Rewriting the Basics: Literacy Learning in Children's Cultures</i> New York:Teachers College Press.</p>
	<p>Dyson, A.H. (2002). <i>Children, Language, and Literacy: Diverse Learners in Diverse Times</i> New York:Teachers College Press.</p>
	<p>Dyson, A.H. (2002). <i>The Brothers and Sisters Learn to Write: Popular Literacies in Childhood and School Cultures</i>. New York:Teachers College Press.</p>

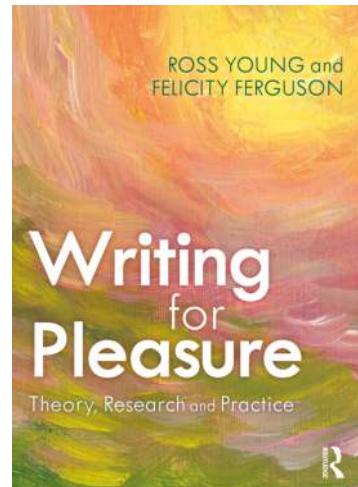
 Anne Haas Dyson	<p>Dyson, A.H. (1997). <i>Writing Superheroes: Contemporary Childhood, Popular Culture and Classroom Literacy</i>. New York:Teachers College Press.</p>
 Anne Haas Dyson	<p>Dyson, A.H. (1994). <i>Social Worlds of Children Learning to Write in an Urban Primary School</i>. New York:Teachers College Press.</p>
 Grainger, Goouch, and Lambirth	<p>Grainger, T., Goouch, K., and Lambirth,A. (2005). <i>Creativity And Writing: Developing Voice And Verve In The Classroom</i>. London: Routledge.</p>
 Frank Smith	<p>Smith, F. (1988). <i>Joining the Literacy Club</i>. Oxford: Heinemann.</p>

Chapter 6

Motivation

Introduction

This chapter discusses the affective domain of motivation, which is associated with goal theory, self-determination, engaging instruction, value theory, writer attitude, and interest theory. Motivation is a vital force in increasing writers' engagement and their writing performance. Evidence is presented about the strong relationship between writer motivation and academic achievement. Theory, research, and educational practices associated with developing children's motivation in writing and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are also explored in the chapter. This includes discussion on the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers who hold high and low levels of motivation. Finally, the authors share the relationship between developing apprentice writers' intrinsic, extrinsic, and situational motivation and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching. They give examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.



[DOWNLOAD CHAPTER](#)

Li, Q., Yao, Y., & Zhu, X. (2024). The association between writing motivation and performance among primary school students: considering the role of self-efficacy. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 11(1), 1-10.

This research article investigates how writing motivation and self-efficacy impact the academic performance of fourth-grade students in China. The study specifically highlights that intrinsic motivation (learning for personal satisfaction) positively influences a student's confidence in generating ideas, following conventions, and self-regulation.

In contrast, the data suggests that extrinsic motivation, such as seeking grades or social praise, does not significantly affect these areas of self-belief.

A key finding is that self-regulation self-efficacy serves as the primary bridge through which internal drive translates into higher quality narrative writing.

These results suggest that fostering a genuine interest in the craft of writing is more effective for primary school development than traditional external pressures. Consequently, the authors recommend that educators prioritise teaching strategies that build emotional management and creative autonomy to improve long-term writing outcomes.

- **Focus on developing intrinsic motivation:** Educators should emphasise the importance of writing for future careers and assign intrinsic value to writing tasks, as this type of motivation significantly enhances self-efficacy for ideation, conventions, and self-regulation.
- **Prioritise self-efficacy for self-regulation:** Since self-efficacy for self-regulation is a salient predictor of writing performance, teachers should implement strategies that help students manage the cognitive and behavioural aspects of the writing process.
- **Design authentic and achievable tasks:** Instruction should involve crafting authentic, challenging, yet achievable writing tasks to boost student engagement, creativity, and achievement.
- **Create a supportive classroom environment:** Teachers should model positive attitudes to establish a writing community that fosters self-expression and creativity.
- **Facilitate emotional expression through writing:** Educators can help students manage negative emotions by encouraging them to use writing as a tool for emotional regulation without fear of criticism.
- **Shift away from extrinsic pressures:** In the Chinese primary school context, practitioners should note that extrinsic motivation (such as grades or competition) may not affect self-efficacy, suggesting that teaching should focus more on personal interest than on outperforming others.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; self-efficacy; intrinsic motivation; self-regulation; pursue authentic and purposeful class writing projects; agency; autonomy; authorial control; self-expression

Graham, S., Harris, K. R., Kiuhara, S. A., & Fishman, E. J. (2017). The relationship among strategic writing behavior, writing motivation, and writing performance with young, developing writers. *The Elementary School Journal*, 118(1), 82-104.

This research study investigates how cognitive and motivational factors influence the writing development of fourth-grade students. By testing the *Model of Domain Learning*, the authors demonstrate that strategic writing behaviours and self-efficacy are distinct predictors of a child's ability to produce high-quality text.

While gender also accounts for some differences in performance, the findings highlight that a student's internal beliefs and 'procedural knowledge' independently drive their growth as writers.

The study concludes that academic competence is not solely a matter of skill, but is significantly shaped by a student's attitude and deliberate planning. Consequently, the authors suggest that educators should integrate motivation-boosting techniques and explicit strategy instruction to better support young writers.

The study suggests several key implications for educational practice:

- **Prioritise motivation and strategic skills:** Procedures designed to enhance writing motivation and strategic writing skills should be made more prominent within writing programmes, as they are currently applied infrequently by many elementary teachers.
- **Build a community of writers:** Teachers should focus on developing a supportive classroom environment and creating a stimulating mood during dedicated writing time.
- **Pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects:** Students should be engaged in meaningful writing projects that have real-world purposes and specific audiences to increase their investment in their compositions.
- **Provide targeted reinforcement:** Educators should praise both writing successes and the effort students expend, while also making students' individual gains as writers visible to them.
- **Teach collaborative skills:** Beyond just allowing students to work together, teachers should train students on how to work together productively to plan, evaluate, and revise their papers.
- **Implement explicit strategy instruction:** Teachers should explicitly teach strategies for the various stages of writing, including planning, drafting, revising, and proof-reading text.
- **Use instructional scaffolds:** The use of procedural facilitators and graphic organisers can help students apply and maintain more sophisticated strategic behaviours.
- **Model strategic behaviours:** Teachers should model specific strategic behaviours themselves and subsequently encourage students to apply those same modelled techniques in their own compositions.
- **Address the "knowledge-telling" approach:** Because young writers often rely on a simplified 'knowledge-telling' approach that minimises strategic thought, teacher intervention is necessary to facilitate more sophisticated mental tools for composing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; build a community of writers; read, share, think and talk about writing; self-regulation strategy development instruction; teacher modelling; be a writer teacher; teach the writing processes; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Takada, M. E., Lemons, C. J., Balasubramanian, L., Hallman, B. T., Al Otaiba, S., & Puranik, C. S. (2023). Measuring kindergarteners' motivational beliefs about writing: a mixed-methods exploration of alternate assessment formats. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1217085.

This research paper explores various methods for measuring kindergarteners' motivational beliefs about writing and discusses the implications of these findings, particularly for educators.

- Focus on creating supportive learning environments that foster positive beliefs. The interview data indicated that children often referenced the importance of learning, practice, and specific strategies (like sounding out words) in developing their writing skills and positive self-efficacy. Providing instruction that empowers children and gives them agency in their writing process may be beneficial.
- Be careful not to assume a "lack of motivation" in students based on behaviours like getting frustrated with mistakes or asking for help. The study found that these behaviours might reflect a realistic understanding of their current abilities or an awareness of available support rather than a lack of motivation. Misinterpreting these behaviours can lead to potentially harmful positioning of students as "struggling learners".
- Consider that many kindergarteners may already hold positive orientations towards writing. Instead of focusing solely on interventions to "fix" a perceived lack of motivation, educators might prioritise creating environments that help children maintain these positive beliefs as they progress through school.
- Be mindful of the social dynamics in the classroom. Even at a young age, children are aware of their

classmates' writing abilities and may engage in social comparisons that can influence their motivational beliefs. Teachers play a crucial role in how students are positioned and praised, which can impact the development of their writing identities.

In conclusion, this research suggests that understanding kindergarteners' motivational beliefs about writing is complex and requires moving beyond traditional survey methods. By paying attention to the context of learning, listening to children's voices, and creating supportive environments, teachers can better foster and maintain positive writing motivation in young learners.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; create a community of writers; early writers; emergent writing

Zhang, C., & Quinn, M. F. (2020). Preschool children's interest in early writing activities and perceptions of writing experience. *The Elementary School Journal*, 121(1), 52–74

This study investigated preschool children's interest in early writing activities and their perceptions of writing experiences.

One key finding is that preschool children showed a significantly stronger interest in non-writing activities involving meaningful themes and artistic learning materials compared to transcription-focused writing activities. This suggests that teachers should be mindful that traditional writing activities like copying letters and words may not be the most engaging for young children.

The research also highlighted that while children could generally identify traditional writing activities, they sometimes misidentified non-writing activities (like book reading, painting, and making paper boxes) as writing. This suggests that teachers should provide explicit instruction on the purpose of writing materials and the characteristics of writing activities in meaningful contexts. It may be beneficial to explicitly explain the steps involved in writing, such as forming letters, spelling words, and composing text.

Children's interview responses indicated that most liked to write, but their reasons varied, and many still connected writing closely with drawing. Some children also acknowledged the challenges of writing. This suggests that teachers should acknowledge the developmental connections between drawing and writing and provide encouragement and support to help children overcome perceived difficulties in writing.

The study found that children's interest in traditional writing activities was low, possibly due to the focus on rote practice of handwriting skills without a meaningful context. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to integrate writing into meaningful activities and play-based learning, rather than teaching it as an isolated skill. Embedding writing into daily routines can help children see writing as a sociocultural practice with personal relevance.

Moreover, the finding that children preferred to write independently, particularly at school, while adult-mediated writing (by parents and teachers) was also common, suggests a need for balance. Teachers should provide increased opportunities for children's independent writing alongside scaffolded instruction to allow for exploration and self-construction of writing experiences.

Finally, the study did not find significant gender differences in writing interest. This suggests that teachers should avoid making assumptions about boys' and girls' interest in writing and provide engaging writing opportunities for all children.

In summary, this research emphasises the importance for teachers to move beyond solely transcription-focused writing activities and to create engaging and meaningful writing experiences that are integrated with other learning areas, potentially incorporating digital tools, providing explicit instruction about writing, acknowledging the link between drawing and writing, offering opportunities for both independent and supported writing, and ensuring equitable engagement for all children.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; teach the writing processes; teach mini-lessons; SRSD instruction; balance composition and transcription; drawing; digital writing; early writers; emergent writing; preschool children

Malpique, A., Valcan, D., Dass, R., Pino-Pasternak, D., & Ledger, S. (2025). Motivation to write in the digital age: examining early primary students' attitudes towards paper and computer-based text composing. *Reading and Writing*, 1-30.

This research article examines how general and specific writing attitudes influence the compositional quality and productivity of Grade 2 students across paper and computer-based platforms. While children displayed positive dispositions toward both formats, their handwriting attitudes significantly

predicted the success of their paper-based work, whereas keyboarding attitudes did not show a similar link to computer-based performance.

Qualitative interviews revealed that students associated manual writing with physical fatigue and digital writing with technical difficulties, such as struggling to locate keys. Despite these challenges, the study highlights that keyboarding automaticity is a more powerful predictor of digital writing success than student motivation. Ultimately, the authors argue for balanced primary instruction that develops both psychomotor skills and positive motivational beliefs to support emerging writers in a digital age.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; handwriting instruction; typing instruction; writing fluency

Pearce, J. M. (2025). Exploring motivation for secondary school writing (Doctoral dissertation, University of Canterbury).

This PhD thesis investigates the motivational factors influencing school-based writing among Year 8 and Year Nine students in New Zealand. Through a mixed-methods research design, the author explores student and teacher perspectives to identify barriers and enablers to writing competence during the transition to secondary school.

The study utilises *Social Cognitive Theory* and the *Not-So-Simple View of Writing* to analyse how self-efficacy, task value, and self-regulation impact learner engagement.

Data collection involved student focus groups, questionnaires, and teacher interviews to gather a comprehensive view of the instructional environment. Ultimately, the research highlights a significant disconnect between student desires for autonomy and the curricular demands faced by educators. These findings suggest that supporting literacy requires balancing explicit skill instruction with authentic, relevant writing opportunities across all subject areas.

- **Strengthen explicit writing instruction** across all levels of schooling to address declines in both achievement and motivation. This involves intentionally designing lessons that segment complex skills into manageable parts, clearly modelling content, and providing scaffolded support until students can work independently.
- **Explicitly teach self-regulation and self-management strategies** to help students move from the "planning" phase of motivation to the "action" phase. Students require direct instruction in goal setting, planning, text organisation, and time management to navigate the cognitive demands of writing.
- **Negotiate "justified relevance"** by providing clear rationales for why specific writing projects, processes, and strategies are important. Explaining the "why" behind a class project can activate student agency and help them make connections between school-based tasks and the communicative competence needed in the real world.
- **Optimise feedback cycles** by providing real-time, differentiated feedback that includes opportunities for students to respond and improve their compositions. This approach encourages students to focus on process-related growth and self-improvement rather than purely on achievement-based outcomes or grades.
- **Increase dedicated time for both instruction and practice.** Both students and teachers identify time constraints as a major barrier; students need "low-stakes" time to apply skills and form habits across different contexts without the immediate pressure of formal assessment.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; autonomy; authorial agency; ownership and responsibility; explicit writing instruction; collaboratively-controlled class writing projects; explicit writing instruction; be a writer teacher; teacher modelling; set writing goals; self-regulation strategy development instruction; set process goals; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; pupil-conferencing; verbal feedback; formative assessment; teach the writing processes; increase writing time and frequency;

Rocha, R. S., Magalhães, S., Castro, S. L., Limpo, T. (2024) Writing performance in primary grade: exploring the links between cognitive and motivational variables. *Front. Educ.* 9:1323345.doi: 10.3389/feduc.2024.1323345

This study investigates the interplay between cognitive and motivational factors in primary school children's writing abilities. Researchers examined the relationships between cognitive skills (like transcription and executive functions), motivational variables (self-efficacy and attitudes towards writing), and writing performance (measured by planning and text length). The findings reveal a complex interaction, with attitudes significantly predicting both planning quality and text length, while self-efficacy showed less of an impact on writing performance. The study highlights the importance of considering both cognitive and affective dimensions in writing instruction, suggesting a need for approaches that target both aspects jointly.

- Traditionally, the teaching of writing has predominantly focused on cognitive aspects, often neglecting the crucial role of motivation. The research suggests that a more effective approach should target both aspects concurrently. This is supported by findings indicating the interplay between cognition and motivation in writing and their combined influence on essential indicators of writing performance.
- Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model of instruction is an effective approach that embodies this holistic view. SRSD provides students with explicit instruction and structured practice to develop writing-specific and general cognitive processes, including executive function skills. This approach helps students optimise their writing performance. Furthermore, SRSD fosters student motivation and engagement with writing tasks by equipping them with self-regulation strategies. By learning to set goals before writing and monitor their own progress, students are more likely to be invested, persistent, and find enjoyment in writing.
- Teachers should implement a process-oriented approach to teaching writing that values intermediate work, provides feedback on multiple drafts, and praises student effort. This approach can help students develop positive attitudes towards writing, which can, in turn, enhance their writing performance.

The research emphasises the importance of teachers understanding the complex interaction between cognitive and motivational factors in writing development. By adopting instructional approaches like SRSD and fostering positive attitudes towards writing, teachers can effectively support students in becoming proficient writers.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; teach the writing processes; teach mini-lessons; SRSD instruction; balance composition and transcription

Aitken, A. A. (2023). More Motivating than Cherry Pie? The Writer (s) Within Community Model of Writing Through a Motivation Theory Lens. In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Writing Research: A Festschrift for Steve Graham* (pp. 53-71). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Until now, the Writer(s) Within Community (WWC) Model of Writing has been characterised as a socio-cognitive model. Dr. Steve Graham presented writing as a socially situated activity within a community of writers that requires an individual's cognitive processes to create a written product. However, the WWC is also a motivational writing model. Although Graham referred to some motivational aspects of the WWC model, his references to motivation were predominantly superficial (e.g., motivation, intrinsic motivation) rather than grounded in specific motivation constructs or theories. This chapter expands upon Graham's current theory to view it through a motivational lens of Bandura's social cognitive motivational theory. I describe minor modifications to the current WWC's conceptual framework with writing at the centre of the bullseye and added motivational constructs in the writer(s) and writing community components. After delving into how specific motivational constructs interact with the writer(s) and the writing community, as well as the motivational effects the writer(s) and community have upon one another, future directions for analysing motivational aspects of the WWC are discussed.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; social-cultural theory; community and environmental orientation; social cognitive motivational theory

De Smedt F, Landrieu Y, De Wever, B., Van Keer, H. (2023) The role of writing motives in the interplay between implicit theories, achievement goals, self-efficacy, and writing performance, *Front. Psychol*, 14:1149923.

It is well established that students' motivation for writing is a key predictor of their writing performance. The aim of the current study is to study and map the relations underlying different motivational constructs (i.e., implicit theories, achievement goals, self-efficacy, and writing motives) and to investigate how these contribute to students' writing performance. For that, 390 Flemish students in stage three of the academic track of secondary education (16–18 years old) completed questionnaires measuring their implicit theories of writing, achievement goals, self-efficacy for writing, and writing motives. Furthermore, they completed an argumentative writing test.

Path analysis revealed statistically significant direct paths from:

- Entity beliefs of writing to performance avoidance goals
- Mastery goals to self-efficacy for writing, performance-approach goals to self-efficacy for writing, and performance avoidance goals to self-efficacy for writing
- Self-efficacy for regulation to both autonomous and controlled motivation
- Mastery goals to autonomous motivation
- Performance approach and avoidance goals to controlled motivation
- Autonomous motivation to writing performance

This study moves the field of writing motivation research forward by studying the contribution of implicit

theories, achievement goals, and self-efficacy to students' writing performance, via writing motives.

Free: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; implicit theories; achievement goals; self-efficacy; self determination; mastery-oriented approach; high-stakes performance approach; performance-avoidance goals; writing motives

Zumbrunn, S., Marrs, S., Broda, M., Ekholm, E., DeBusk-Lane, M., & Jackson, L. (2019). Toward a more complete understanding of writing enjoyment: A mixed methods study of elementary students. *AERA Open*, 5(2), 2332858419850792.

This mixed methods study explored elementary students' (N = 263) writing enjoyment, their perceptions of teacher writing enjoyment, self-regulation, and grades. In the quantitative strand, we examined how student perceptions of teacher writing enjoyment and student writing enjoyment relate to student writing self-regulation and writing grades using structural equation modelling.

Findings revealed a positive relationship among student-perceived teacher writing enjoyment, student writing enjoyment, and student writing self-regulation and grades. In the qualitative strand, we explored responses of students with high or low writing enjoyment ratings to understand aspects of the instructional environment that contribute to students' affective experiences with writing. Much of what determines students' enjoyment of or aversion to writing fell in to one of two categories, regardless of the degree to which they enjoy writing: writing preferences (e.g., topic/genre selection, writing environment) or mood and motivation (e.g., student mood at the time of writing, self-efficacy for writing).

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writing enjoyment; motivation; be a writer-teacher; teacher self-efficacy; self-regulation; agency; genre study; build a community of writers; self-efficacy

Ng, C., & Renshaw, P. (2023). Promoting Writing and Writing Engagement Through Self-Regulation, Motivation, Effective Instruction and Perezhivanie. In *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Writing Research: A Festschrift for Steve Graham* (pp. 29-51). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Extensive research on writing has drawn attention to four engagement enablers in writing:

- Self-regulation
- Motivation
- Reading-writing connections
- Effective writing instruction

Following a brief review of these enablers, we describe the theoretical work on community and writing in his writer(s)-within writing model. In this theoretical discussion, Steve Graham has taken a sociocultural turn, drawing attention to complex influences on writing and writing engagement derived from personal and social realms. Building on Graham's theoretical model, we re-conceptualise the personal and social realms in terms of Vygotsky's notion of 'perezhivanie' (how your personal feelings mix with what's happening around you), highlighting:

- The dynamic unity of personal and situated influences on children's writing
- The interdependence of emotion and intellect in writing
- Students' sense-making and self-making during the writing process.

We elaborate this theoretical perspective using two cases from our research projects. The first case discusses students' reflective writing following their experiences during a forest excursion designed as a narrative place-based pedagogy that engages children in imaginative role-play and inquiry activities. The second case was a design-based investigation examining the use of emotionally charged literacy activities to create a dramatic situation to re-engage a group of disaffected students in reading and writing activities. In each case, there is attention to the sense-making, self-making and emotionality arising from experience and its transformation across time/space.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writing enjoyment; motivation; self-regulation; connect reading and writing; writer-identity; affective writing needs; build a community of writers; community and environmental orientation; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; writing realities; perezhivanie writing

Friddle, K. A., & Ivey, G. (2023). Motivate and Engage Our Youngest Writers, *The Reading Teacher*.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2251>

Research suggests that when young children have many opportunities to write they start believing they are the sort of people who can write for intellectual, academic, and social purposes. They also learn foundational reading skills. Project-like compositional writing involving design, strategies, and problem solving versus functional writing or shorter writing episodes, promises even more benefits. A question for teachers is how might we motivate young children toward complex projects when they are still learning basic literacy concepts. We take up this problem by focusing on the conditions under which young children might be motivated to write, specifically through the lenses of self-determination theory and engagement. We suggest that making books, a complex compositional activity, linked to shared reading and study of multimodal picture books, combine for a vigorous social practice where children's motivational needs can be met. We offer practical recommendations for facilitating motivated, engaged writing in a classroom.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writing enjoyment; motivation; writing engagement; build a community of writers; community and environmental orientation; book-making; connect reading and writing; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; set writing goals; publishing goals; self-determination theory; agency

Gambrell, L. B., Hughes, E. M., Calvert, L., Malloy, J. A., & Igo, B. (2011). Authentic reading, writing, and discussion. *The Elementary School Journal*, 112(2), 234–258. <https://doi.org/10.1086/661523>

In this innovative study, we delved into the realms of reading, writing, and discussion within the captivating framework of a pen pal intervention centred on authentic literacy tasks. Embracing a mixed-method design and employing a triangulation-convergence model, our research sought to unravel the dynamic relationship between authentic literacy tasks and the literacy motivation of 180 elementary students. Additionally, we aimed to illuminate whether students showcased accountability to community, content, and critical thinking during engaging small-group discussions.

Our diverse data sources, including pre- and post intervention scores on the Literacy Motivation Survey, transcripts of small-group discussions, and insightful interviews with 28 key student informants, painted a comprehensive picture. The integration of findings from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives strongly suggests that authentic literacy tasks possess the transformative potential to not only bolster but sustain students' literacy motivation. Further analysis of the discussions unveiled the students' commendable accountability to community, content, and critical thinking. As we explore the implications of these findings, we delve into the enriching landscape of incorporating authentic tasks into literacy instruction. Moreover, we offer valuable insights for future research directions, sparking a conversation on the exciting possibilities that await in the realm of literacy education.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; authentic and purposeful class writing projects; reading and writing connection

Truax, M. L. (2018). The impact of teacher language and growth mindset feedback on writing motivation. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 57(2), 135–157. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19388071.2017.1340529>

This study addresses the prevalent issue of students developing a fixed mindset, often influenced by the national emphasis on standardised test scores. The research focuses on exploring the impact of teacher language, specifically the inclusion of growth mindset feedback, on the writing motivation of second and third-grade students. Employing a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design that incorporates discourse analysis and a comparison of means, the researcher assesses the effects of the experimental treatment.

While the quantitative results did not reveal statistically significant effects, qualitative findings suggest that objective feedback had a positive influence on writing motivation. Furthermore, the combination of growth mindset feedback, particularly when paired with objective compliments, played a crucial role in advancing students along a growth mindset developmental progression, ultimately contributing to increased writing motivation. The study's implications extend to educational research, policies, and teaching practices, emphasising the potential benefits of fostering a growth mindset in students to enhance motivation, particularly in the domain of writing.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; growth mindset; teacher feedback

Motivation is a catalyst for writing performance in school. In this article, we report a systematic review of empirical studies on writing motivation conducted in school settings, published between 2000 and 2018 in peer-reviewed journals. We aimed to

- Examine how motivational constructs have been defined in writing research
- Analyse group differences in writing motivation
- Unveil effects of motivation on writing performance
- Gather evidence on teaching practices supporting writing motivation
- Examine the impact of digital tools on writing motivation

Studies showed that overall girls were more motivated to write than boys. Most studies indicated moderate positive associations between motivation and writing performance measures. Authors also examined how students' writing motivation was influenced by teaching practices, such as handwriting instruction, self-regulated strategy development instruction, and collaborative writing.

Digital tools were found to have a positive effect on motivation.

Based on this review, we suggest that to move the field forward, researchers need to accurately define motivational constructs; give further attention to understudied motivational constructs; examine both individual and contextual factors; conduct longitudinal studies; identify evidence-based practices that could inform professional development programs for teachers; and test long-term effects of digital tools.

Free: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; gender; handwriting instruction; self-regulation strategy development instruction; teach daily mini-lessons; read, share, think and talk about writing; collaborative writing; digital tools; writer-identity; writer-teachers

Jaeger, E. L. (2022) "I won't won't be writing": young authors enact meaningful work, *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 1-17

The article considers the beliefs and practices of elementary-aged children who write for personal fulfillment. The author examines the ways in which these children experienced writing and sharing their work in a voluntary after school writing workshop and at home.

Data are gathered from observations of the children as they wrote and shared their ideas with peers, from interviews in which they conveyed their beliefs about and experiences with writing, and from the varied texts they composed surfaced the core aspects of meaningful work: self-development, self-expression, and unity with others. The children were aware of their individual needs as writers, they were delighted in the opportunity to control their writing activities, and they interacted with peers and family members as they produced texts.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: volition; writing for pleasure' writing as pleasure; motivation; self-determination theory; writer-identity; pursue personal writing projects; writing at home; home writing; collaborative writing; pupil voice; children's views on writing

Martin, M. S., Bell, S. M. (2022) Relations Between Writing Motivation and Achievement of Elementary-Aged Students, *Journal of Education*, 00220574221112630

The purpose of this study was to examine the relations between writing self-efficacy and writing achievement of elementary students (aged 9-11). Participants completed measures of writing motivation and achievement. Results indicate a significant positive correlation between narrative writing self-efficacy and writing achievement as well as a significant positive relation between writing skills self-efficacy and writing achievement.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; self-efficacy; writing performance

Which knowledge and skills would help creative writing students to improve their writing? Writing is a complicated activity that involves the mingling of a great number of social, cognitive, behavioural, environmental, and bodily factors, and an incredible number of these factors have been shown to affect the writing process. One cognitive factor which has significant effects upon the writing process is the writer's motivation to write. In this paper, I review research from motivational and educational psychology in order to set the stage for future research in this area. I review research on nine (or so) motivational constructs which could have positive effects on the creative writing processes of some groups of writers, and I develop some hypotheses that researchers could use to test the veracity of this research. Finally, I discuss some of the ways in which future researchers in the field of creative writing studies could study the effects that these motivations have on the creative writing processes of different writers.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; creative writing; agency; self-efficacy; relatedness; interest; content knowledge; mastery; self-regulation; revision

Bruning, R., Horn, C. (2000) Developing motivation to write, *Educational Psychologist*, 35(1), 25-37

Two decades of cognitive research have shown writing to be a highly fluid process of problem solving requiring constant monitoring of progress toward task goals. Becoming an able writer brings great intellectual and social rewards, but the extended nature and difficulty of this process create unique motivational challenges. Speech development provides some models for development of writing motivation, but writing requires special attention to motivational conditions. Four clusters of conditions are proposed as keys to developing motivation:

- Nurturing functional beliefs about writing
- Fostering engagement using authentic writing tasks
- Providing a supportive context for writing
- Creating a positive emotional environment.

Teachers' own conceptions of writing are seen as crucial to establishing these conditions in most writing contexts. Systematic motivational research complementing our knowledge about the cognitive processes of writing is needed to understand the development of motivation to write. The authors recommend that to develop students' motivation to write, teachers needed to get students to see the nature of writing and also its power as a communication tool. Having real objectives and audiences was also recommended as important motivational support. Third, students also needed to experience a positive writing environment. Some aspects of such an environment included breaking down a writing task into smaller chunks, setting small goals, receiving feedback on progress, and learning writing strategies. Lastly, students needed help to overcome their initial negative feelings about writing as well as their unproductive writing habits.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; create a community of writers; read, share, think and talk about writing; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; pursue personal writing projects; be a writer teacher; pupil conference; set writing goals; teach daily mini-lessons; self-regulation strategy instruction

Barratt-Pugh, C., Ruscoe, A., Fellowes, J. (2021) Motivation to Write: Conversations with Emergent Writers, *Early Childhood Education*, 49, 223-234

This article describes the processes and outcomes of a research project exploring children's motivation to write, undertaken by four pre-primary teachers in Western Australia.

One hundred and nine children aged between five and six years shared their views of writing in conversation with their teacher. Thematic analysis in conjunction with statistical analysis indicated that the majority of children were motivated to write. They had a positive attitude towards writing, evidenced by their self-efficacy and were developing aspects of self-determination evidenced by their sense of ownership and control of the codes of writing. They had some understanding of the value of writing as a means of supporting reading and securing a positive future, thus enhancing their motivation to write.

However, a small group of children indicated that they did not like writing, found writing hard, and did not know how or what to write. In addition, few children mentioned writing as a means of communication. The absence of purpose and audience in the children's responses was partly explained by the teachers' focus on the codes of writing, potentially impacting on children's motivation. This prompted the teachers to re-conceptualise their writing program in ways that engaged children in authentic writing tasks, while continuing to scaffold their understanding of the codes of writing.

This collaborative approach to research, in ways that privilege children's voices, has implications for informing pedagogy across a range of early childhood contexts and curriculum areas.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; self-efficacy; agency; emergent writers; early writers; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; encoding; balance composition and transcription; teach daily mini-lessons

Mata, L. (2011) Motivation for Reading and Writing in Kindergarten Children, *Reading Psychology*, 32:3, 272-299

In a three year study, 67 children in two schools were observed during literacy activities in Grades 1–3. Children and their teachers were interviewed each year about the children's motivation to read and write.

Analysis suggests that children's motivation for literacy is best understood in terms of development in specific contexts. Development in literacy skill and teachers' methods of instruction and raising motivation provided affordances and constraints for literate activity and its accompanying motivations.

The positions of poor readers and the strategies they used were negotiated and developed in response to the social meanings of reading, writing, and relative literacy skill co-constructed by students and teachers in each classroom. The relationship of these findings to theories of motivation is discussed.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; emergent writers; early writers

Bollinger, C., Myers, J. (2020) Young Children's Writing in Play-Based Classrooms, *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 48:233-242

Few studies connect teachers' intentionality with children's writing in play-based contexts. Thus, the goal of this study was to examine how the use of writing stations and intentional teaching encouraged writing in two preschool classrooms.

Interviews with the preschool director and classroom teachers as well as observations of the children helped our understanding of how the teachers worked to naturally integrate writing into children's play.

Findings suggest learning stations that encourage writing offer authentic and creative opportunities for composition, but must be scaffolded with intentional teaching in order for children to continue to develop their writing skills.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; self-efficacy; be a writer teacher; teach daily mini-lessons; read, share, think and talk about writing; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; pursue personal writing projects; emergent writers; early writers; writing stations; writing centres

VanNess, A., Murnen, T., Bertelsen, C. (2013) Let Me Tell You a Secret: Kindergartners Can Write!, *International Literacy Association*, 66(7) pp.574-585

During her first two years of teaching, a kindergarten teacher (first author) developed a writing program grounded in five instructional strategies that repeatedly appear in emergent writing research:

- Modelling
- Scaffolded Writing
- Invented spelling
- Word walls
- Reader response

She believed in the overarching principle of Gradual Release of Responsibility. She illustrates how the writing program evolved and how it gets implemented in her classroom, and demonstrates the clear growth students made in one year using this approach.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; self-efficacy; be a writer teacher; mentor texts; teach daily mini-lessons; balance composition and transcription; encoding; spelling; read, share, think and talk about writing; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; emergent writers; early writers

De Smedt, F., Graham, S., Van Keer, H. (2018). The bright and dark side of writing motivation: Effects of explicit instruction and peer assistance, *The Journal of Educational Research*, 112(2), 152–167

The authors investigated the impact of explicit instruction and peer-assisted writing on students' writing motivation and self-efficacy for writing. Eleven teachers and their 206 fifth- and sixth-grade students participated in two (explicit instruction vs. writing opportunities without explicit instruction) and two (peer-assisted writing vs. writing individually) experimental intervention study with a pretest-posttest design.

Analyses showed that students who wrote with a peer were more autonomously motivated at posttest than other students. Additionally, students receiving explicit instruction were more controlled and motivated than students who were offered ample writing opportunities while practising individually. Theoretical and educational implications are discussed in view of realising a bright pathway towards autonomous writing motivation.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; self-efficacy; set writing goals; teach daily mini-lessons; read, share, think and talk about writing

De Smedt, F., Merchie, E., Barendse, M., Rosseel, Y., De Naeghel, J., Van Keer, H. (2018) Cognitive and motivational challenges in writing: Studying the relationship with writing performance across students' gender and achievement level, *Reading Research Quarterly*, 53(2), 249–272

In the past, several assessment reports on writing repeatedly showed that elementary school students do not develop the essential writing skills to be successful in school. In this respect, prior research has pointed to the fact that cognitive and motivational challenges are at the root of the rather basic level of elementary students' writing performance. Additionally, previous research has revealed gender and achievement-level differences in elementary students' writing. In view of providing effective writing instruction for all students to overcome writing difficulties, the present study provides more in-depth insight into:

- How cognitive and motivational challenges mediate and correlate with students' writing performance
- Whether and how these relations vary for boys and girls and for writers of different achievement levels.

In the present study, 1,577 fifth- and sixth-grade students completed questionnaires regarding their writing self-efficacy, writing motivation, and writing strategies. In addition, half of the students completed two writing tests, respectively focusing on the informational or narrative text genre. The results underline the importance of studying writing models for different groups of students in order to gain more refined insight into the complex interplay between motivational and cognitive challenges related to students' writing performance.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; gender; self-efficacy; set writing goals

Garrett, L., Moltzen, R. (2011). Writing because I want to, not because I have to: Young gifted writers' perspectives on the factors that "matter" in developing expertise, *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 10(1), 165–180

The study reported on here sought to better understand the development of writing talent from the perspectives of a group of gifted adolescent female writers. Recent shifts in how giftedness and talent are conceptualised has led to an increased focus on domain-specific abilities and the importance of understanding how specific talents can be identified and supported. The participants in this study were asked to reflect on the development of their interest and ability in writing over time. Emerging from their feedback were two categories of catalysts: the intrapersonal and the environmental.

For this group of students, intrapersonal catalysts were more influential to the realisation of their writing talent than environmental catalysts. This intrinsic motivation to write, and from an early age, is consistent with studies of eminent adult writers. Parents and teachers were important environmental catalysts. The participants in this study valued the input and support of teachers, particularly during the early years of their schooling. However, as they moved through the school system, these students felt the nature of the curriculum, and assessment practices increasingly threatened their intrinsic motivation for writing and diminished the satisfaction gained from writing at school.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; gender; pupil voice; children's view on teaching writing

Graham, S., Berninger, V., Fan, W. (2007) The structural relationship between writing attitude and writing achievement in first and third grade students, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 32(3), 516–536

This study tested three models of the structural relationship between the writing achievement of primary grade students and their attitude towards writing (defined here as an affective disposition involving how the act of writing makes the author feel, ranging from happy to unhappy). The three models tested were:

- Writing attitude influences writing achievement in a unidirectional manner
- Writing achievement influences writing attitude in a unidirectional manner
- The effects of writing attitude and achievement are bidirectional and reciprocal.

The model that best fit the data was based on the assumption that writing attitude influences writing achievement. In addition, the direct path between attitude and achievement in this model was statistically significant. Although third grade students were better writers than first grade students, there was no statistical difference in younger and older students' attitude towards writing. In addition, girls were more positive about writing than boys, but there was no statistical difference in their writing achievement related to gender. This research extends models based on the cognitive and language processes of writing to include the role of attitude, which is an affective component of motivation.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; gender

Hall, A., Axelrod, Y. (2014) 'I am kind of a good writer and kind of not': Examining students' writing attitudes, *Journal of Research in Education*, 24(2) , 34–50.

Since writing ability has been found to be an important predictor of school success and college readiness, it is important for teachers to understand the connections between students' attitudes toward writing, writing self-efficacy, and writing achievement.

This article describes the findings from focus groups conducted with 81 students in grades K-5 during which participants discussed their attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs about writing. Focusing on the power of students' voices, this study adds a unique perspective not often found in the affective domain of writing research. Five broad themes emerged related to students' writing attitudes including children's:

- Feelings about writing
- Writing confidence
- Motivators for writing
- Writing preferences
- Responses to their teachers' influence

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic writing class projects; multimodality; generating ideas; set writing goals

Magnifico, A. (2010) Writing for whom? cognition, motivation, and a writer's audience. *Educational Psychologist*, 45(3), 167–184

When writers write, how do they decide to whom they are speaking? How does this decision affect writers' cognition about writing? Their motivation to write?

In this article, Magnifico reviews literature on cognitive and social processes of writing, conceptualizations of audience, writing across distinct learning environments, and writers' motivations. They then show how understandings of audience can be linked to those of motivation and interest and how this combination may bridge a traditional divide between research traditions. Finally, I examine the implications of bringing these areas of literature together; the necessity of re-examining the role of audience in light of new media-infused learning environments; and the opening of possible areas for future research in writing, audience, and motivation.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic writing class projects; multimodality; generating ideas; set writing goals

Nolen, S. (2007) Young children's motivation to read and write: Development in social contexts, *Cognition and Instruction*, 25(2–3), 219–270

In a 3-year study, 67 children in two schools were observed during literacy activities in Grades 1–3. Children and their teachers were interviewed each year about the children's motivation to read and write. Child interviews identified the motivations that were salient to children at each grade level in each domain, looking for patterns by grade and school. Analysis of field notes, teacher interviews, and child interviews suggests that children's motivation for literacy is best understood in terms of development in specific contexts. Development in literacy skill and teachers' methods of instruction and raising motivation provided affordances and constraints for literate activity and its accompanying motivations. In particular, there was support for both the developmental hypotheses of Renninger and her colleagues (Hidi & Renninger, 2006) and of Pressick-Kilborne and Walker (2002). The positions of poor readers and the strategies they used were negotiated and developed in response to the social meanings of reading, writing, and relative literacy skill co-constructed by students and teachers in each classroom. The relationship of these findings to theories of motivation is discussed.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic writing class projects

Oldfather, P. (2002) Students' experiences when not initially motivated for literacy learning, *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 18(3), 231–256

This case study provides:

- Insights about students' thoughts, feelings, and actions when not initially motivated for literacy tasks
- Ways in which some of those students were able to become intrinsically interested.

Students participated as co-researchers and reported their subjective experiences in three different motivational situations.

- Students who were initially not motivated but became so combined empowering ways of thinking (e.g. searching for worthwhileness or self-regulating attention) with the completion of an activity.
- Students who lacked motivation throughout writing but managed to complete the writing focused on external purposes, and did not use metacognitive strategies. Their primary desire was to "get it over with."
- Students who lacked motivation and didn't complete the writing used avoidance strategies, and/or felt paralyzed.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation

Pajares, F. (2003) Self-efficacy beliefs, motivation, and achievement in writing: A review of the literature, *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 19(2), 139–158

The purpose of this article is to examine the contribution made by the self-efficacy component of A. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory to the study of writing in academic settings. A brief overview of Bandura's social cognitive theory and of self-efficacy is first provided, followed by a description of the manner in which writing self-efficacy beliefs are typically operationalized and assessed. This is followed by a synthesis of research findings that address the relationship between writing self-efficacy, other motivation constructs related to writing, and writing outcomes in academic settings. These findings demonstrate that students' confidence in their writing capabilities influence their writing motivation as well as various writing outcomes in school. Academic implications and strategies that may help guide future research are offered.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; self-efficacy

Troia, G., Harbaugh, A., Shankland, R., Wolbers, K., Lawrence, A. (2013) Relationships between writing motivation, writing activity, and writing performance: Effects of grade, sex, and ability, *Reading and Writing*, 26(1), 17–44

Children and adolescents in grades 4 through 10 were asked to complete a writing motivation scale and to provide a timed narrative writing sample to permit an examination of the relationships between writing motivation, writing activity, writing performance, and the student characteristics of grade, sex, and teacher judgement of writing ability.

- Female students and older students wrote qualitatively better fictional stories, as did students with higher levels of writing ability based on teacher judgement.
- With respect to writing activity, more frequent writing in and out of school was reported by girls, better writers, and younger students.
- In a path analysis, grade and sex directly influenced writing activity, while sex, teacher judgement of writing ability, and writing activity directly influenced some aspects of writing motivation.

Overall, teacher judgement of writing ability, grade level, and motivational beliefs each exerted a significant direct positive influence on narrative quality, whereas performance goals exerted a significant direct negative impact on quality.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; gender; be a writer teacher

Vaknin-Nusbaum, V., Nevo, E., Brande, S., Gambrell, L. (2020) Reading and writing motivation of third to sixth graders, *Reading Psychology*, 41(1), 44–70

Motivational questionnaires were used to investigate reading and writing motivation (self-concept and value) among Hebrew-speaking students in third to sixth grade. Findings revealed:

- Reading and writing motivation remained at the same level in all four grades
- Reading motivation was higher than writing motivation
- Students' self-concept was higher than value in both reading and writing
- Value of reading was higher than the value of writing.

It is suggested that educators take into account the importance of increasing reading and writing motivation in the early years of elementary school, before motivation stabilises in third grade. Additionally, attention should be paid to the value that students attach to reading and especially writing, since it may be related to their involvement in reading and writing tasks.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; connect reading and writing; self-efficacy

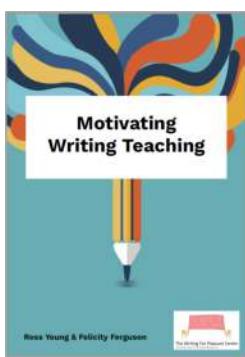
Miller, S., Meece, J. (1999) Third graders' motivational preferences for reading and writing tasks, *The Elementary Journal*, 100(1), 19–35

In this study we evaluated 24 third-grade students' preferences for reading and writing tasks. Tasks were identified according to challenge level based on the amount of required writing, whether students studied collaboratively, and duration. Students who had frequent opportunities to complete high-challenge tasks preferred them because they felt creative, experienced positive emotions, and worked hard. Students with less exposure to high-challenge tasks questioned whether they had the appropriate metacognitive abilities to complete them. Overall, students expressed a dislike for low-challenge tasks because they were boring and required minimal thought. Discussion focuses on how teachers can scaffold instruction for students at different achievement levels.

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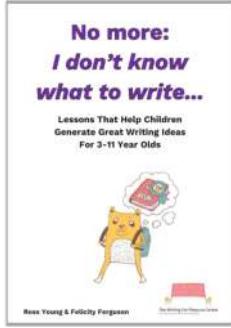
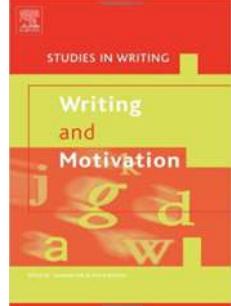
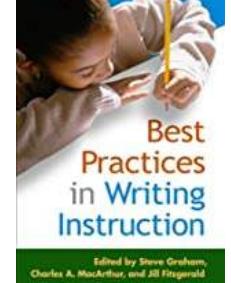
Tags: self-efficacy; motivation; metacognition; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects

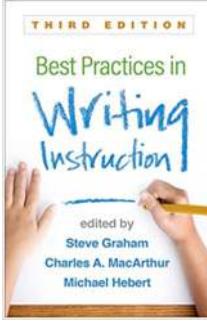
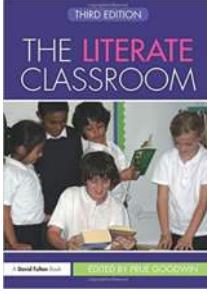
Recommended chapters and literature



Young, R. Ferguson, F. (2025) *Motivating Writing Teaching* Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK](#)

In *Motivating Writing Teaching*, writer-teachers Ross Young and Felicity Ferguson share what writing motivation is, how it develops, and how to cultivate it in your classroom or school. From the authors of *The Science Of Teaching Primary Writing* and *Writing For Pleasure*, this latest publication provides an actionable framework based on the five drivers of writing motivation: (1) Setting up success, (2) Creating a writing culture, (3) Mobilising motives, (4) Instilling writer-identity and (5) Boosting buy-in. This practical framework will help your pupils care more about crafting quality writing and develop them as volitional, motivated and independent writers.

	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2021) 'Volition' In <i>Writing For Pleasure</i> London: Routledge LINK</p> <p>This chapter discusses the affective domain volition, which is defined as the need, desire, urge, or the internal compulsion to write, sometimes described as purposive striving or personal endorsement. The authors present evidence which shows how engagement of volition stimulates apprentice writers' desire to harness the knowledge and skills necessary for the creation of excellent written texts. Theory, research, and educational practices associated with developing children's volition to write and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are also explored in this chapter. Consideration is given to the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers who feel high or low levels of volition. Finally, the authors describe the relationship between apprentice writers' volition to write and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching. Included are examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.</p>
	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2022) <i>No More: I Don't Know What To Write... Lessons That Help Children Generate Great Writing Ideas</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]</p>
	<p>Boscolo, P., Hidi, S. (2006). <i>Writing & Motivation</i>. Holland: Elsevier Science.</p>
	<p>Boscolo, P. (2009). Engaging and motivating children to write. <i>The SAGE Handbook of Writing Development</i> Beard, R., Myhill, D., Riley, J., and Nystrand, M. (Eds.). London: Routledge.</p>
	<p>Boscolo, P., Gelati, C. (2007). Best practices in promoting motivation for writing. <i>Best Practices in Writing Instruction</i>, Graham, S., MacArthur, C., and Fitzgerald, J. (Eds.) (pp.202–221). New York: Guildford.</p>

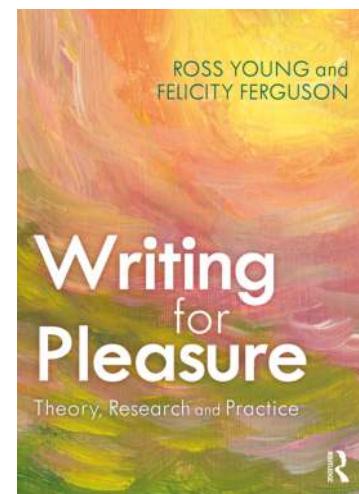
	<p>Boscolo, P., Gelati, C. (2019). Motivating Writers. In <i>Best Practices in Writing Instruction</i>, Graham, S., MacArthur, C., and Hebert, M. (Eds.) (3rd Ed.) (pp. 51–78). New York: The Guilford Press.</p>
	<p>Cremin, T. (2010). Motivating children to write with purpose and pleasure. <i>The Literate Classroom</i>, Goodwin, P. (Ed.) (pp. 131–141). London: Routledge.</p>

Chapter 7

Writer-Identity

Introduction

This chapter discusses the affective domain writer-identity, which is known as self-perception, self-concept, social belonging, possible selves, writer-belief, or as having ownership of your writer's voice. Theory, research, and educational practices associated with children's writer-identity and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are explored within this chapter. It includes discussion of the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers who have strong and weak writer-identities. The authors also explore the relationship between children's funds of identity, funds of knowledge, and writer-identity. Finally, the chapter describes the interconnection between developing apprentice writer-identities and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching and includes examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.



[DOWNLOAD CHAPTER](#)

Wesseling, E. (2019). Researching child authors: Which questions (not to) ask. *Humanities*, 8(2), 87.

This article investigates the emerging field of child authorship and challenges the traditional view that children's literature is solely an adult-led endeavor.

The author argues against a "hermeneutics of suspicion" that views adult-child creative partnerships as inherently repressive, suggesting instead that these collaborations can empower young voices.

By applying Marah Gubar's "kinship model of childhood", the text explores how children and adults are related through shared capabilities rather than being entirely distinct species.

The paper highlights modern examples, such as the *Dutch Slash Series* and digital self-publishing, where young writers address serious topics like migration and homelessness. Ultimately, the author advocates for empirical research and "discourse tagging" to better appreciate children's creative agency as a vital part of their developing citizenship. This approach seeks to move beyond theoretical debates about the "impossibility" of children's literature to recognise the authentic contributions of young writers.

The following implications for practice regarding child authorship and intergenerational creative collaboration are identified:

- **Adopt a "Kinship Model" of Childhood:** Practitioners and researchers should move away from the "deficiency model" (children as underdeveloped adults) and the "difference model" (children as a separate, opaque species). Instead, adopting a kinship model allows for an understanding of children as related to adults, acknowledging power differences and dependencies without dismissing the possibility of child agency or authentic partnership.
- **Move Beyond the "Hermeneutics of Suspicion":** There is a tendency in the field to view any adult intervention in child-authored work as inherently repressive or silencing. An alternative approach is to view creative collaboration between adult mediators and youthful storytellers as potentially mutually beneficial and meaningful, provided the nature of the collaboration is scrutinised with an open mind.
- **Implement Ethical Criteria for Collaboration:** To ensure fair practice in intergenerational partnerships, practitioners should adhere to explicit ethical standards. These include ensuring informed consent, confirming that both parties benefit equally (including financially), and striving for authenticity by acknowledging the limits of memory and the multiplicity of the self.
- **Utilise "Discourse Tagging" for Cultural Inquiry:** This methodological approach involves assembling heterogeneous genres (such as canonised adult literature, young adult fiction, and child-authored poetry or life writing) that deal with the same societal issue. By identifying shared "structuring statements" or commonplaces across these diverse bodies of work, practitioners can reveal a society's deepest assumptions about topics like homelessness, ethnic conflict, or migration.
- **Recognise Mediation as a Tool for "Cultural Bridging":** Rather than viewing editorial interventions, such as footnotes, introductions, or explanatory comments, as "muting" the child's voice, they can be practiced as philological efforts to bridge cultural or temporal gaps. Such interventions can enable a child author to gain a hearing in a wider world that may otherwise find their context inaccessible.
- **Validate Imitation and Genre Emulation:** Practitioners should accept that child authors enter the "republic of letters" in the same way adults do: by imitating and emulating inspiring examples and well-established genres. Expecting "unmediated purity" or a categorical difference from adult writing is

a form of Romantic mythologising that ignores how all authors are shaped by culture.

- **Promote New Publication Models:** The sources highlight the value of digital platforms and print-on-demand technologies in reducing commercial risks, thereby facilitating more opportunities for children to write about and for themselves. Series like the Dutch *Slash Series* provide a practical template for coupling established authors with youthful informants to produce aesthetically sophisticated life writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writer-identity; culturally sustaining pedagogies; writing realities; funds-of-knowledge; funds-of-identity; writer identity; intertextuality; reading/writing connection; be a writer-teacher; co-construction of text; shared writing; shared authorship

Jesson, R., Parr, J., & McNaughton, S. (2013). The unfulfilled pedagogical promise of the dialogic in writing. International Handbook of Research on Children's Literacy, learning and Culture. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 215-227.

This paper explores the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy in the teaching of writing, specifically for students from diverse linguistic and social backgrounds. It argues that writing should be viewed as a dialogic process, where learners build upon their existing intertextual histories and community-based knowledge to master academic conventions.

The authors highlight a frequent disconnection between home literacy practices and school expectations, which can hinder a student's motivation and cognitive development. To bridge this gap, the chapter suggests that effective instruction must incorporate students' prior resources as a foundation for learning new, highly valued curricular forms. By validating a student's unique voice and identity, educators can create a "third space" that fosters both academic success and personal agency. Ultimately, the text advocates for a responsive teaching model that treats students' varied cultural experiences as essential assets rather than obstacles.

The following implications for practice are identified for educators seeking to implement culturally responsive and dialogic writing instruction:

- **Identify students' intertextual histories:** Teachers should actively seek to find out about the sources of students' ideas and the diverse texts (oral, visual, or written) they encounter at home and in their communities.
- **Adopt a "funds of knowledge" approach:** Educators can participate as researchers within their students' communities to better understand cultural contexts and integrate these "funds of knowledge" into the classroom.
- **Overcome deficit theorising:** It is vital to move away from viewing students through a lens of what they lack, instead acknowledging them as culturally centred and drawing on their existing expertise as a primary resource for learning.
- **Create instructional bridges:** Early instruction should mobilise what students already know, while subsequent stages must provide "bridges" to unfamiliar academic genres and curriculum requirements.
- **Permit and encourage "borrowing":** Explicitly give students permission to appropriate and "remix" language and ideas from home and social texts, framing this intertextuality as a powerful way to make meaning.
- **Promote hybrid forms of writing:** Allowing students to develop writing that incorporates community-based literacy skills alongside academic ones can help them develop positive identities as agentive writers.
- **Implement dialogically oriented read-alouds:** Use reading sessions to encourage student comments and respond contingently, allowing students' emerging understandings to become the "anchors" of classroom discussion.
- **Foster peer collaboration:** Capitalise on students' ability to learn from one another through co-participation and guided practice, which develops reflection and rehearsal.
- **Create co-constructed supports:** Support writing by having students and teachers co-create charts, tools, or signs that record their evaluative understandings of source texts.

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Tags: treat every child as a writer; culturally sustaining pedagogies; culturally responsive pedagogy; writing realities; funds-of-knowledge; content knowledge; background knowledge; funds-of-identity; writer identity; intertextuality

McCarthey, S. J. (2001). Identity construction in elementary readers and writers. *Reading research quarterly*, 36(2), 122-151.

This article explores how literacy practices and perceptions influence the self-identity of fifth-grade students from diverse backgrounds. The core of the research involves a qualitative study using life-story and case-study methods, collecting data through interviews with 12 students, their parents, the teacher, and peers, as well as classroom observations and writing analysis.

Findings indicate that success in literacy, the visibility of performance and the coherence of others' perceptions (parents, teachers, and peers) contribute significantly to a student's self-concept as a reader and writer.

Specifically, the study notes that for successful, avid readers, literacy is a central feature of their identity, whereas less successful students often rely on other aspects of selfhood, and that the curriculum unintentionally shapes students' views of reading (external, points-based) versus writing (more complex and subjective). The work suggests implications for educators, emphasising the value of understanding multiple perspectives on a student and creating forums for identity exploration beyond prescriptive assignments.

The following is a list of implications for practice drawn from the study:

- **Provide multiple opportunities for identity exploration** Give students frequent opportunities to explore various aspects of their identities.
- **Legitimise talk and writing on sensitive issues** Legitimise students' attempts to talk and write about issues of race and class within the classroom context.
- **Communicate with close parties** Communicate frequently with parties close to the students (parents, peers, etc.).
- **Reconceptualise identity** Reconceptualise identity as a space where aspects of students' private and public selves might blend.
- **Gather diverse perspectives** Recognise the value of gaining information about students from different people close to them.
- **Conduct interviews about home/school life** If feasible, teachers should build time into their schedules to interview parents and students about their home and school lives to understand varied cultural contexts and address student needs.
- **Connect literate selves to identity** Provide students with opportunities to connect their literate selves with other aspects of their identity.
- **Use multicultural literature critically** Encourage students to read books about people like themselves and multicultural books that offer opportunities to discuss issues of culture and class.
- **Facilitate critical discussions** Use literature as a context for discussing race, class, and gender, allowing students the option of keeping discussions focused on the character or relating themes and events to themselves. Merely reading the literature is insufficient; discussions must include critical questions focused on issues of social justice.
- **Value spontaneous responses** Value and legitimate students' attempts to talk or write about identity issues as they arise in context, as this may be more fruitful than requiring responses to specific journal questions.
- **Encourage activist writing** Allow students to write about personal experiences and take more activist stances to help them see literacy as a powerful tool to connect their various subidentities, but do not require or badger them to do so.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writer identity; connect reading and writing; writing realities; culturally sustaining pedagogy

Curwood, J. S., Magnifico, A. M., & Lammers, J. C. (2013). Writing in the wild: Writers' motivation in fan-based affinity spaces. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(8), 677-685.

This article investigates the writing motivations and practices of young adults within fan-based online affinity spaces, arguing that these digital environments provide essential opportunities for achievement and engagement.

Drawing from ethnographic studies related to The Hunger Games, Neopets, and The Sims, the authors explore how features like self-directed participation, the presence of a passionate public audience, and multimodal portals shape literacy. The research highlights three case studies — Cassie, Sheena, and Eve — to illustrate how they are motivated to create and share "transformative works," which are creative pieces inspired by the original fan content. Ultimately, the piece suggests that educators should look at these out-of-school, digital literacy practices to inform and improve writing pedagogy in formal classroom settings.

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Tags: writer identity; connect reading and writing; intertextuality; fan fiction; pursue personal writing projects; writing realities; culturally sustaining pedagogy

Darren Chetty explores the concerning phenomenon where children of colour often feel they must write stories featuring only white characters and English names. Drawing on his experience as an educator, he argues that a lack of diverse representation in literature and media leads students to believe their own lives do not qualify as subject matter for fiction. The text critiques the industry-wide exclusion of minority voices and the limitations of "colour-blind" teaching, which often ignores the structural marginalisation present in children's books.

Chetty advocates for a more inclusive curriculum where books act as mirrors for all students, allowing them to see themselves as protagonists. By explicitly encouraging children to draw on their own cultural backgrounds, teachers can help them move beyond a single story and find their own authentic authorial voices.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writer identity; funds-of-knowledge; funds-of-identity; funds-of-language; writing realities

Smith, K. (2014). Young children as 'becoming' writers within the context of a school classroom: Creating alternative approaches to hear children through their writing activity. *He Kupu (The Word)*, 3(5), 55-67.

This paper proposes a reconceptualisation of early childhood writing by challenging the rigid, outcomes-based frameworks found in the English national curriculum. Drawing on socio-cultural theories and Deleuzian philosophy, the author argues that writing should be viewed as a dynamic process of "becoming" rather than a linear progression toward fixed literacy targets. Through the analysis of a classroom vignette, the text illustrates how children use writing tools to navigate complex social relationships, physical sensations, and imaginative play. This perspective shifts the focus from the final written product to the relational encounters and productive forces that occur when bodies, emotions, and materials intersect. Ultimately, the source advocates for a more nuanced listening methodology that values the "un-fixed" and transformative nature of a child's unique communicative voice.

- **Contextualise literacy learning:** Practice should shift away from teaching literacy as "discrete elements" or "segmented units," such as isolated "phased synthetic phonics programs". Writing activity must be understood as a whole social experience where meanings are built through participation in authentic, communicative social activities.
- **Valuing the process over the product:** The "essence of production" lies in the "attentional quality of the action" and its unfolding rather than the "completed writing object". Practitioners should attend to the movement, interactions, and 'relational encounters' that occur during the act of writing, rather than just the final marks on a page.
- **Support children as active designers:** Children should be viewed as "modifiers of literacy" who engage in a process of "design and redesign". They should be given the opportunity to challenge existing literacy structures and infuse their writing with their own social identities, desires, and knowledge of the world.
- **Recognise the role of sensation and emotion:** Writing is an "entanglement between language and the body" driven by bodily sensations and emotional responses (referred to as *perezhivanie*). Practice should acknowledge how laughter, physical movement, and "unruly" sensations are vital dimensions of the writing process.
- **Embrace multimodality:** Practice should extend into a "diverse semiotic," recognising writing as a multitude of communication practices including visual representation, drawing, and gesturing. These "thinking technologies" help children adapt and develop social and cultural practices.
- **Adopt 'listening' methodologies:** Practitioners need to employ sensitive and responsive listening approaches that tune into the "turning point of thought" within children's conversations. This involves exploring children's voices as a shared narrative and following the "growth and transformation" within their relational networks.
- **Develop relational environments:** Teachers should plan for writing encounters that encourage collaborative thinking and social interaction. Recognising that writing activity is a "meshwork" of connections between people, objects, and ideas allows for a more "complex and potentially limitless" understanding of the child writer.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writer identity; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; teach the writing processes; drawing; funds-of-identity; writing realities; emotion; multimodality; pupil-conferencing; verbal feedback; intertextuality; culturally sustaining pedagogy; read, share think and talk about writing; naturalistic self-expressionist orientation

This research paper examines how asset-based and relational pedagogies, implemented through writing workshops in two US primary classrooms, impact young children's writing. The study uses the *Writing Realities Framework* to analyse children's compositions, focusing on writing identity, critical literacy, culturally sustaining pedagogy, translanguaging, and intertextuality. Findings indicate that these pedagogical approaches foster a sense of belonging and agency, allowing children to express their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds while engaging with social and political issues. The researchers observed how children's writing reveals their relationships with peers, teachers, the environment, and popular culture.

- **Writing Identities:** Children enter classrooms with various writing experiences. Teachers should build on these experiences and support children as capable writers who can construct texts for their intended purposes and audiences. This can be accomplished by allowing children to choose their writing topics, as demonstrated in Ms. R.'s poetry unit where students wrote about subjects ranging from exotic animals to cartoon characters.
- **Critical Literacy:** Encourage children to explore topics that promote disruption, dissonance, problem-solving, and critique. This allows them to leverage their learning, challenge the status quo, and write counter-narratives to dominant storylines. In Ms. J.'s class, students addressed issues like kindness, bullying, and race relations through their writing, advocating for a more just world.
- **Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy:** Teach through, with, and from children's cultural and community knowledge and resources. This involves sharing a wide array of culturally specific and accurate literature and creating space for children to represent themselves in their writing. Ms. J. and Ms. R. implemented this by reading books that highlighted diversity and encouraging students to write about their lived experiences and cultural understandings.
- **Multiliteracies:** Children should be given opportunities to create and represent meaning across various sign systems, such as singing, dancing, painting, and acting. This helps them understand how different texts and media can impact audiences and expand meaning-making. The teachers in the study fostered multiliteracies by positioning each child as a fellow writer capable of supporting others, leading to collaborative apprenticeships and the creation of joint texts.
- **Translanguaging:** Value and honour the diverse languages and linguistic practices children bring to the classroom. Teachers should recognise the fluidity and flexibility with which children use language and avoid viewing non-standard English as a deficit. Ms. J. exemplified this by accepting her students' use of African American Language, allowing them to express themselves authentically.
- **Intertextuality:** Recognise and encourage the incorporation of out-of-school textual experiences, like popular culture references, into children's writing. This allows them to connect their personal interests to their writing, fostering social relationships and playful exploration of ideas. Both Ms. R. and Ms. J. observed students incorporating elements from cartoons, movies, and anime into their work, demonstrating their understanding of and connection to popular culture.

The study found that when teachers implemented the *Writing Realities Framework* through a writer's workshop approach, children were able to:

- Assume writer identities and express their individual voices.
- Engage in critical thinking and explore social issues.
- Connect their cultural backgrounds and lived experiences to their writing.
- Develop their ability to create meaning through multiple modes of expression.
- Utilise their full linguistic repertoires without fear of judgment.
- Incorporate their interests and out-of-school textual experiences into their work.

The researchers emphasise the importance of noticing the relationality in children's writing. This means paying attention to the relationships they build through their writing – relationships with themselves, their peers, their teachers, and the wider world. By recognising these relationships, teachers can gain insights into children's understanding of themselves and their place in the world. The study suggests that teachers who create supportive writing environments based on the *Writing Realities Framework* can foster a love of writing and empower children to use their voices to make sense of the world around them.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; community and environmental orientation; writer-identity; funds-of-identity; writing realities; asset-based teaching; relationality

Ramdarshan Bold, M. (2025) 'I felt her poems were more like my life': cultivating BPoC teenagers' writer-identity through a poet residency. *Literacy*, 59: 21–33.

This research article examines a poet-in-residence programme's impact on secondary school students' writer identities, focusing on Black and People of Colour (BPoC) teenagers in a predominantly white institution. Using qualitative methods like focus groups and interviews, the study explores how the residency fostered self-expression and engagement with poetry, but also reveals how systemic racism within the school limited BPoC students' full participation. The presence of a young, relatable BPoC poet positively influenced students'

relationships with writing, particularly for BPoC students who lacked representation in literature and felt a need for protected creative spaces. The findings highlight the importance of anti-racist practices and culturally sustaining pedagogies in empowering BPoC students and developing their writer identities.

- Teachers should be aware of the potential disconnect between students' public and private writer identities. Students, especially those from marginalised groups, may be reluctant to share their writing in class due to fear of judgment or ridicule.
- Teachers should strive to create a classroom environment where students feel safe and supported in expressing themselves authentically, without fear of negative consequences.
- Teachers should recognise the need for protected creative spaces for BPoC students. BPoC students may feel more comfortable sharing their writing and exploring their identities in spaces where they are not the minority.
- Teachers should be mindful of power dynamics in the classroom and how they might impact students' sense of safety and belonging. This includes being aware of their own positionality and potential biases.
- Teachers should consider creating opportunities for BPoC students to connect and build community, such as identity-based writing groups. Teachers should challenge negative perceptions of writing and explore alternative ways to engage students in reading and writing. Traditional approaches to teaching writing can be off-putting for students, who may find it difficult and irrelevant to their lives.
- Teachers should focus on the process of writing as well as the product, and create opportunities for students to experiment with language and ideas without fear of judgment.
- Teachers should recognise the importance of diverse role models for students. Having a writer-in-residence like Sarai, a young, Muslim woman, can challenge students' preconceived notions of what a writer looks like and who writing is for.
- Teachers should make an effort to expose students to a wide range of writers from different backgrounds. Teachers should create opportunities for students to interact with writers and poets, either in person or virtually.
- Teachers should learn from the practices of writers and poets and consider incorporating similar approaches into their own teaching. Writers and poets often have valuable insights into the writing process and can offer students a different perspective on writing. Teachers can learn from the writer-in-residence approach to creating a supportive and engaging learning environment.
- Teachers should be mindful of the potential emotional labour involved in working with students from marginalised groups and ensure that they have the support they need.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of creating a classroom environment that is inclusive, supportive, and empowering for all students, particularly those from marginalised groups. By being mindful of the issues raised in the study, teachers can help to foster students' creativity, confidence, and love of writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: community and environmental orientation; writer-identity; funds-of-identity; writing realities; treat every child as a writer; Black and People of Colour; be a writer-teacher; writer residency

Donovan, E. (2016). Learning to embrace our stories: Using place-based education practices to inspire authentic writing, *Middle School Journal*, 47(4), 23–31. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00940771.2016.1202657>

The idea of place extends beyond just the location where people live. Place is a narrative, a story that involves interactions, characters, conflicts, and the rise and flow of humanity. By understanding the importance of place and the connection to the places from which people originate, the people, their motivations, and their strengths and weaknesses begin to take a shape that inspires transformational ideas and actions. Adolescents must often deal with issues that are attached to the places they live.

This article explores the adolescent and how, by learning about their own community, they may begin to tell and embrace their stories. When education provides space for students to write stories in which they are the expert, they can begin to take pride in their abilities while learning to respect the home, school, and community that has informed who they are.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; community and environmental orientation; writer-identity; funds-of-identity; writing realities

Smith, P. (2022). A transraciolinguistic approach for literacy classrooms. *The Reading Teacher*, 75(5), 545-554.

In a world where students are increasingly navigating boundaries, both locally and globally, virtually and geographically, willingly and involuntarily, literacies play a pivotal role. These students, often of diverse linguistic backgrounds, possess the skills to adeptly traverse new school and life landscapes. A significant portion of these boundary-crossing students are individuals of colour who grapple not only with critically reading words but also with understanding and addressing issues of racialization.

This intersection of students' border-crossing, linguistic diversity, and experiences of racialization presents a unique opportunity to explore how teachers can conscientiously centre race. By identifying and harnessing the literate assets that immigrant and transnational students of colour bring, educators can facilitate meaningful learning experiences both within and beyond the classroom. This article advocates for a transraciolinguistic approach, positioning it as a crucial and intersectional tool to centre race and address racialized language, all while acknowledging and supporting students' border-crossing experiences in their literacy practices.

Offering practical insights, the article discusses recommendations for teachers aspiring to cultivate a transraciolinguistic approach. These recommendations aim to create an inclusive and supportive environment for critical literacy practice, emphasising the importance of recognizing and embracing the diverse linguistic and racial backgrounds that contribute to the rich tapestry of students' experiences.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: community and environmental orientation; build a community of writers; writer-identity; funds-of-identity; funds-of-language; writing realities

Lawson, A. (2023). "We Can Draw and Think About It Ourselves": Putting Culture and Race in Phonics Reading Research. *Reading Research Quarterly*.

This study addresses the critical need for improved literacy experiences for young children of colour from minoritized communities during phonics instruction. Traditional decodable readers often use White Mainstream English and narratives that may not resonate with the diverse experiences of these children. In response to this gap, the research explores the potential for young learners to co-author decodable stories using their phonics skills, lived experiences, and home languages, including nondominant English languages. The goal is to leverage student-generated decodable readers to enhance decoding skills and bridge the identity gap in phonics instruction.

Grounded in a quantitative and qualitative study conducted in an urban second-grade classroom, the research draws on culturally relevant education and the language experience approach. This approach centres on utilising students' funds of knowledge and existing language experiences, often embedded in their racial identities, to advance decoding skills. By combining these strategies with co-authorship, children of colour from minoritized communities are placed at the forefront of phonics instruction, providing a more equitable educational opportunity and advancing their decoding skills as active contributors to their own learning through co-authorship of decodable stories.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: community and environmental orientation; build a community of writers; culturally relevant education; writer-identity; funds-of-identity; funds-of-language; writing realities; phonics; encoding; connect reading and writing; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Lee, B. K., Enciso, P., & Austin Theatre Alliance. (2017). The big glamorous monster (or Lady Gaga's adventures at sea): Improving student writing through dramatic approaches in schools. *Journal of literacy research*, 49(2), 157-180.

This study draws on asset-oriented, sociocultural theories of imagination and learning to advocate for the positive impact of dramatic teaching approaches on students' story writing. The authors assert that the improvisational qualities and expanded resources inherent in dramatic methods contribute to improved quality and persistence in students' writing endeavours.

The study presents findings from a controlled quasi-experimental investigation into the outcomes of an 8-week program, *Literacy to Life*, integrating story-writing and drama. Implemented in 29 third-grade classrooms across elementary schools in the same urban Texas district, with and without Title I funding, the study's pre- and post-measures reveal significant positive results. Particularly noteworthy are the gains observed in writing self-efficacy, story building, and generating and revising ideas, with a more pronounced impact on students in Title I-funded schools.

The research findings, coupled with the sociocultural theoretical framework, advocate for increased resources to support opportunities for students to practise combinatorial imagination and leverage cultural knowledge in creative writing, as exemplified by the *Literacy to Life* program.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: community and environmental orientation; writer-identity; funds-of-identity; funds-of-knowledge; writing realities; dramatic methods; self-efficacy; teaching the writing processes; generating ideas; revision; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Research on children's play asserts that children's identities are performed and (re)formed in peer groups where they try out identities and make sense of their social worlds. Yet there are kinds of play (e.g., violence, gore, sexuality, and consumer culture) that are often hidden and taken underground, deemed inappropriate for public spaces. These underground spaces are potentially revolutionary (#playrevolution) as children disrupt power hierarchies and regulatory boundaries in both subtle and overt ways. These spaces are important for children who are consistently marginalised by intersecting identities, further complicated by negative perceptions attached to certain topics constituting dark play. Thus, what if we look beyond labelling certain play episodes "inappropriate" and consider how children produce and enact culture? What seems nonsensical and irrational to the adult gaze is about creative participation, agency, and autonomy for children.

Results in this study showed how children actively took up tools and ideas from horror story genres (e.g., chainsaws, blood, and masks), while their local context served as the setting for their own stories: the nearby high school, Halloween parties, and popular costumes. They remixed stories to include curricular demands (e.g., true stories) with popular culture interests. However, they did not reveal these seemingly "inappropriate" topics to their teacher and the demands of school literacy. Their resulting written stories were not pictures of chainsaws, bloody deaths, and killer dolls: They were "masked" by attempts at writing letters underneath pictures of houses, trees, cars, rainbows, and people. Arguably, the children knew how to navigate the official space of school, understanding which ideas were appropriate for their secret conversations and which were appropriate for public sharing. In the midst of their play, children learned how to write from one another: Certain words were borrowed across the table, pictures (e.g., rainbows) symbolised common practices, and storylines were "copied" and reappropriated from others. These literacy attempts were trademarked and encoded on their written texts to signify belonging and participation at the intersection of popular culture and play.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; writer-identity; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; writing realities; read, share, think and talking about writing; pursue personal writing projects; early writers; early writing

Land, C. L. (2022) Recentering purpose and audience as part of a critical, humanising approach to writing instruction, *Reading Research Quarterly*, 57(1), 37-58

This study addressed tensions faced by teachers in balancing the types of writing valued in today's schools, the needs of today's writers beyond school, and the rich cultural and linguistic resources that students bring into today's classrooms. New understandings illuminated in this article highlight how one teacher drew on purpose and audience, as (re)defined tools for writing, to recognize and value her students' capabilities and to support them as agentive designers of texts. To examine these possibilities for repositioning students and approaching writing instruction from a critical, humanising perspective, I describe this teacher's shift from beginning with genre to beginning with purpose and audience and draw attention to the teacher's and students' use of these tools for guiding their decision making across multiple writing situations in a school year.

(£) [LINK](#)

Tags: pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; perspective taking; theory of mind; inference; genre study; generating ideas; agency; writer-identity; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity;

Wearmouth, J., Berryman, M., Whittle, L. (2011) 'Shoot for the moon! 'Students' identities as writers in the context of the classroom, *British Journal of Special Education*, 38(2), 92-99

A study of students' identities as writers was carried out in the classroom of a New Zealand primary teacher who had been formally identified by a national body of teachers as having excellent practice in supporting literacy acquisition. The researchers compared high and low literacy achievers' identities as writers within the context of this teacher's pedagogy and the learning environment of her classroom. The researchers concluded that all students, both high and low achievers, were developing very positive writing identities in a context where the teacher's method of supporting her students' writing was very well planned through a process-writing approach. This teacher had a very high degree of subject and pedagogical content knowledge and an acute awareness of her students' literacy learning needs. Her approach had an immediacy of responsiveness in relation to every student's learning and, above all, had recognition of the overwhelming importance of positive relationships in the classroom, teacher to student and peer to peer.

(£) [LINK](#)

Tags: writer-identity; create a community of writers; writing process; writing workshop approach; responsive teaching; pupil-conferencing

Dutro, E., (2010) What 'hard times' means: Mandated curricula, class-privileged assumptions, and the lives of poor children, *Research in the Teaching of English*, 44(3) pp.255–291

This qualitative analysis looked to understand 8–9 year old's experiences of a commercial literacy curriculum which, according to the researcher, revealed class-privileged assumptions and so failed to offer children time or space to discuss and craft their personal connections with texts. The results of Dutro's analysis and lesson observations concluded that:

- The published scheme being used was written from a middle-class perspective. It treated this perspective as being the norm and carried potentially offensive assumptions about the lives of families living in poverty.
- The curriculum failed to honour or hold any regard for children who live in poverty. Instead, children were required to interpret and write about the studied text in the same way the published scheme writer interpreted it.
- When children did write about their own lives, it was held in disdain and relegated to the mere margins of the literacy classroom. Their lives had no place because they were seen by the scheme to hold no value.

Dutro shares how commercial publishers must honour 'children's sophisticated and deeply felt connections to text' and allow them to craft their own in *personal* response. However, to do so, they must first recognise and then hold in high regard the lives of children living in poverty. Only then will children be able to use their lived knowledge from outside the school gates to support their learning inside the classroom. By inviting children to bring their own ideas and interpretations to class writing projects, we ensure pupils from different cultural and social backgrounds can write from a position of strength and expertise. They are, perhaps for the first time in their young lives, allowed to write their realities.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; connect reading and writing; agency; generating ideas; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Dutro, E., Kazemi, E., Balf, R. (2004) Children writing for themselves, their teachers, and the state in an urban elementary classroom. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA

The purpose of the paper is to look closely at students' complex relationships with writing. Four children brought to their classroom views of writing, perceptions of their own competence in writing, and experiences within and outside of school that facilitated or challenged their success with school writing and state assessments. We focus on the following questions: What is the relationship between children's social and intellectual identities and their successes or struggles in writing? Given the complexities of those relationships, what do their scores on the state assessment reveal and conceal about these children as writers?

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity;

Fisher, T. (2006) Whose writing is it anyway? Issues of control in the teaching of writing, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 36(2), 193–206

In the UK, teachers have moved from a process approach to the teaching of writing to a more didactic and objectives-led programme. This has given rise to concerns about the suppression of creativity and enjoyment. Writing is a convention bound activity where spelling, punctuation and expectations about different text types imply a right and wrong way of writing. On the other hand, the best writers are able to use and subvert conventions in creative and individual ways.

Teachers of young writers are faced with the difficulty of teaching the correct conventions at the same time as encouraging individual responses. This paper considers evidence from a small-scale study that may shed some light on how teachers cope with these potentially opposing demands.

Evidence points to teachers giving very clear guidance to pupils about what is expected of them and carefully scaffolding pupils' learning. However, scaffolding implies a stage where control is handed over to the learners and in this study there was little evidence of these teachers handing over the control. It is argued that for children to learn the conventions at the same time as developing confidence to use these conventions in individual and creative ways, this handover of control is essential.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writer-identity; self-regulation; balance composition and transcription; process writing; genre study

Teachers' perceptions of their changing practice in the context of the *National Literacy Strategy* have been well documented in recent years. However, few studies have collected pupils' views or voices. As part of a collaborative research and development project into the teaching and learning of writing, 390 primary pupils' views were collected. A marked difference in attitude to writing and self-esteem as writers was found between Key Stages 1 and 2, as well as a degree of indifference and disengagement from in-school writing for some KS2 writers. A strong desire for choice and greater autonomy as writers was expressed and a preference for narrative emerged. This part of the research project 'We're Writers' has underlined the importance of listening to pupils' views about literacy, in order to create a more open dialogue about language and learning, and to negotiate the content of the curriculum in response to their perspectives.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writer-identity; agency; self-efficacy; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; pupil voice; children's views on writing

Dyson, A. H. (2018) "From Superman Playing to Singing the Blues": On the Trail of Child Writing and Popular Culture, *Language Arts*, 96:1, 37–46

In this article, Anne Haas Dyson synthesises her decades of research to highlight practices that welcome children's social lives and their knowledge of popular culture into the writing classroom. Her aim is to "illustrate interconnections between children's participation in popular culture and their participation in composing practices" (p. 37), recognizing their work as being immersed in, and influenced by, their local cultures and environments. Noting that children naturally appropriate popular culture into their own writing when given the opportunity, she also shows how they begin to engage in critical reflection about both popular culture and their own lives to create wholly original stories that affirm and evolve their identities.

Dyson's studies show young children independently:

- Adopting conventions of cartooning to explore graphic genre forms and make sophisticated visual puns.
- Crafting original song music and lyrics.
- Creating scripts based on their love of superheroes and directing other children to perform them.
- Using a passion for music to write about famous blues musicians and adopt a strong identity as a budding musician.

Independent exploration of more complex and varied forms of writing led to more complex thinking and richer composition practices. This research demonstrates the power of allowing the "permeable curriculum" of children's social lives to revise and transform the "official curriculum" of schools, and Dyson also highlights the damage that a prescribed curriculum beholden only to skills testing and improving test scores can do to writing growth.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: writer-identity; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; agency; intertextuality; connect reading and writing

Bradford, H., Wyse, D. (2020) Two-year-old and three-year-old children's writing: the contradictions of children's and adults' conceptualisations, *Early Years*, DOI:10.1080/09575146.2020.1736519

This paper reports the findings of in-depth qualitative research to investigate two-year-old and three-year-old children's writing.

It focuses on nine families whose children attended the same early years pre-school setting. The research developed a clear understanding of what children of this age understand about the functions and purpose of writing; and joint understanding amongst parents and early years practitioners of how the children's emergent writing might be supported both in their home and early years setting.

Findings showed that most adults did not perceive that the children could write, a perception that was rooted in the conceptualisation of writing as necessarily formed of conventional text, and a skill to be developed and taught at a later age. In direct contrast to this, the participant children were engaging in their own discourse of writing to record and share meaningful text. It is argued that if young children perceive themselves to be writing, a responsive writing pedagogy can only be effective if the development of writing in the early years is reframed.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writer-identity; early writers; emergent writers

We held up our drinks and cried, "To the writing factory!" sloshing lemonade on our carpet and sleeves as we celebrated my class of kindergartners' first published books.

After a month of learning where to find pencils and paper, how to transfer thoughts to text, and what constitutes a finished piece, the children were ready to celebrate their work. To prepare for their publishing party, the kindergartners stapled their stories into construction paper covers. "We could be a writing factory," Jackson noted, and suddenly we were christened just that. And with a name, a celebratory drink, and their drawings, squiggles, and stories, my class initiated themselves into the lives of writers.

The previous year I had begun teaching at a new school and was attempting to reconcile my belief that writing is crucial for young children with competing expectations put in place by school programs and policies that deemphasized the importance of writing, particularly compared to reading.

My experiences as a kindergarten teacher indicate that my students identify as writers—even before they can write conventionally and even before they can read. I am not alone in noting this. To the adults who don't believe in writing for young children, Lucy Calkins (1994) responds, "[T]he children believe in it" (p. 59). They "discover and invent literacy as they participate in a literate society" (Goodman, 1988, p. 316). Faced with the dissonance of what I was being told as a teacher and what I knew as a teacher based upon my experience, I began asking myself questions that shaped my research, my teaching, and ultimately my own learning:

- How do my kindergarten students develop identities as writers?
- What relationship exists between their reading and writing development?
- What are the implications of this for me as a kindergarten teacher?

Free access (if read online): [LINK](#)

Tags: build a community of writers; every child a writer; emergent writers; early writers; writing workshop; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; connect reading and writing

Cappello, M. (2006) Under construction: voice and identity development in writing workshop, *Language Arts*, 83(6) pp.482-491

This article explores the ways three young students expressed their perceptions about writing and investigates how their classroom identity shapes and is shaped by those perceptions. The ways in which positioning within a writing event and the classroom culture contributed to the development of writing voice and identity are examined. In addition, the article focuses on the influence of the classroom environment on voice through students' opportunities for personal and intentional expressions.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: build a community of writers; writing workshop; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; agency; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Hachem, A., Nabhani, M., Bahous, R. (2008) 'We can write!' The writing workshop for young learners, *Education 3-13*, 36:4, 325-337

The study presents the process of differentiated instruction, its implementation, and impact on second graders who are taught writing through a writing workshop approach.

Findings show that students' writing skills improved as reflected in their progression of text, expansion of ideas, and development in conventional writing.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: emergent writing; early writing; balance composition and transcription; writing workshop; agency; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects

Dyson, A. (2020) 'This isn't my real writing': The fate of children's agency in too-tight curricula, *Theory into Practice*, 59(2), 119–127

In this article, Dyson considers students' power to act on their writing interests and intentions, on their own inclinations; this will-to-act-on-the-world is central to becoming an active, adaptive participant across the life span.

Dyson examines the dynamics through which increasingly structured classrooms for young school children may dampen child agency or push it underground or out-of-school, thereby pushing out important dimensions of children's intellectual energy.

She concludes with what makes young children's writing willful and intentional, that is, "real."

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: writer-identity; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; personal writing projects; agency; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects

Dutro, E., Kazemi, E. (2006) Making sense of 'the boy who died': Tales of a struggling successful writer, *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 22, 325–356

This article presents a case study of a fourth grade boy's experiences in writing, preceding and following a story he wrote about a boy whose struggles in writing led directly to his death.

We explore how Max's writing experiences related to his identity, specifically his sense of himself as a writer, his struggle to communicate his ideas, and his discomfort with expressing private thoughts and emotions in print. Max's story argues for the importance of considering issues of identity in the writing classroom to help students build on the successes that often hide behind the surface struggles of their writing.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; reading and writing connection; personal writing projects; writing workshop

Helsel, L., Kelly, K., Wong, K. (2021) Responsive Teaching in the Writer's Workshop, *The Reading Teacher*, doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2074

Journey with a third-grade community of writers as they develop their writing identities and abilities in a responsive approach to writers' workshop. Instruction is framed around the writers' workshop approach, where students' choice and voice are centred within extended periods of time for writing, alongside daily mini-lessons addressing the ongoing needs of each student writer. Knowledgeable about each child as an individual and as a writer, their teacher, Ms. H tailors whole group, small group, and individual instruction to address their unique needs. She fosters a community of writers through her intentional feedback and guidance to support children as they navigate writing partnerships with their peers. She supports them as they work to overcome roadblocks along the way while celebrating the journey as a community of authors.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: teach mini-lessons; writing instruction; set writing goals; writing workshop; writer-identity; responsive teaching; agency; motivation; treat every child as a writer; build a community of writers; self-regulation strategy instruction; functional grammar instruction; self-regulation; self-efficacy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Collier, D. R. (2010) Journey to Becoming a Writer: Review of Research about Children's Identities as Writers, *Language and Literacy*, 12(1), 147–164.

The beginning years of school are crucial to children's early development as writers. As children learn to write, they transform themselves. This review of literature focuses on children's journeys to becoming writers. The studies identify how children who are beginning to write in extended ways and to construct their identities as writers are often constrained in classroom contexts, particularly within a larger climate of standardised assessment. The ways in which writing practices (including classroom relationships and assessment practices) contribute to children's development as writers and possibilities for transformed practice are discussed.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; self-regulation; responsive teaching

Bourne, J. (2002) Oh, what will Miss say!: Constructing texts and identities in the discursive processes of classroom writing, *Language and Education*, 16(4), 241–259.

This paper examines the construction of children's identities as 'writers' through their positioning in the multiplicity of official and unofficial discourses available to them in the primary classroom. It uses ethnographic observation to focus on how identities are constructed in the process of text construction, and the intersections of ethnicity, gender and institutional identity in the production of 'the writer'. It illustrates the way in which classroom texts are jointly produced over time in social interaction; with 'school writing' as a distinct, routinised, discursive practice. The paper queries the model of the isolated author struggling to communicate with an unknown reader as a suitable model for developing children as writers.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; writing realities; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects

Brown, M., Morrell, J., Rowlands, K. (2011) Never more crucial: Transforming young writers' attitudes toward writing and becoming writers, *California English*, 17(2), 15–17

This article discusses a National Writing Project *Young Writer's Camp* for students in grades four through twelve with initial varying attitudes and writing experiences. The "campers" attitudes and beliefs about writing and their own identities as writers were transformed over two weeks. Based on matched pre- and post-surveys, students showed a positive change in response to ten statements related to attitude toward writing. While two weeks is a short amount of time, the findings suggest that in an effort to raise test scores, teachers have moved away from the evidence-based writing instruction (student choice, revision, writer's craft, publication, and authentic assessment) which has a track record of having a positive effect on the quality and quantity of the texts produced by the young writers. The authors argue that the writing activities done in the camp are possible in classrooms too and that a reconceptualization of writing and writer identity is desperately needed in today's classrooms.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; revision; writer's craft; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects

Compton-Lilly, C. (2006) Identity, childhood culture, and literacy learning: A case study, *Journal of Early Childhood Studies*, 6(1), 57–76

Recent conceptions of identity view people's identities as multiple and situated. The ways we see ourselves are filtered through the relationships we share with others, the knowledges and experiences we bring, and the contexts within which we live and learn. McCarthey and Moje (2002) explain that the identities we construct shape our literacy practices while literacy practices become a means for acting out the identities we assume.

This case study demonstrates how children's identities and cultural resources intersect and converge during literacy learning. Fieldnotes, running records, and audiotaped interviews are used to construct a case study of a reluctant African American student that illustrates the ways students' identities are constructed and revised in conjunction with literacy learning. This case study demonstrates how teachers can access children's cultural resources, funds of knowledge and funds of identity to support their writing.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Gutiérrez, K. (2008) Developing a sociocritical literacy in the Third Space, *Reading Research Quarterly*, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 148–64

In this case study, learners from nondominant, poor and immigrant communities were invited to write using their socio-historical lives, utilising play and their imaginations to write about their futures. The project brought high school learners from migrant-farmworker backgrounds to the University of California to participate in a four-week summer writing school. The participants worked together to write their own autobiographies and crafted testimonio memoir texts which shared socially significant stories and vignettes from their lives. In addition, they were invited to write about the chapters in their life that are yet to come, and to 'socially dream' a better collective future. Gutiérrez concludes that creating such an environment where young people could write in what she terms the 'third space' was profitable for both educators and learners. She encourages teachers to consider how young people's cultural capital can successfully intersect with the content and needs of the curriculum for the benefit of both.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Zapata, A., Laman, T.T. (2016) "I Write to Show You How Beautiful My Languages Are: Translingual Writing Instruction in English Dominant Classrooms." *Language Arts*, 93:5, 366-378.

In this study, the researchers reveal the benefits of a translingual approach to classroom writing, in which bilingual or multilingual children are able to take full advantage of their primary languages in classrooms that are often English-dominant. The study frames different languages as complementary and interconnected, and when teachers create translingual classrooms they see the benefits of children using other languages and "non-standard" English to express themselves in powerful ways. Studying teachers who taught within writing workshop structures to discover how they supported students' uses of multiple languages they discovered that the teachers operated on three principles of instruction:

- They welcomed in their local communities, inviting community members to share their lives, histories, heritages, and languages, both inside and outside of traditional curricular settings;
- They shared their own language histories and repertoires, modelling diverse and integrated language practices that sometimes ran counter to traditional school notions of "correctness";
- They shared "linguistically diverse literature as models of writing."
- They expanded their classroom libraries to include books written in languages other than English and bilingual books; used these books consistently in their writing instruction; invited children to explore the full range of their libraries; and had discussions about the languages, cultures, and identities that the literature revealed.

Ultimately, the researchers suggest that working in these ways helps children build metalinguistic awareness, helps them to value their own rich language backgrounds, and gives them an increased sense of agency.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Lankshear, C., Knobel, M. (2009) More than words: Chris Searle's approach to critical literacy as cultural action, *Race & Class*, 51(2) pp.59-78

This study examines the work of one teacher as he serves his local working-class community and teaches children to write as a way to improve their lives and the lives of others. Part of this process, the authors claim, involved the teacher ensuring that 'learning and literacy are as directly and concretely as possible situated and grounded in the lived experiences of children's lives as members of communities and participants in worldly practices' (p.63). The researchers were able to identify eight key principles of the teacher's approach. These included:

- Promoting and harnessing the imagination of children.
- The promotion of language pride and the use of their 'established languages'.
- Learners being proficient users of standard varieties of English.
- Writing to the highest levels of transcriptional accuracy that they can.
- Being able to legitimately participate in society using discourses and genres that allow them to write with confidence, power and influence.
- Ensuring that writing connects with children's identities, the local community, and their self-development.
- Writing is used as a tool for action and for bringing about change.
- Writing is seen as a social practice and the writing community is built on the precepts of cooperation, collective responsibility and mutual learning.

According to this teacher, 'even reluctant readers and writers will engage in projects that have direct bearing on their interests, concerns and lives' (p.63). In this way, according to the researchers, learning cannot and should not be separated from participation in the very real writing practices which are occurring outside of school. Finally, some of the class writing projects the teacher undertook with his pupils included:

- Producing people's history by interviewing and writing about the lives of women in the local area. This included translating their mother tongue into English. The published content included writings on civil war, resistance movements, migration, racism and the struggles and opportunities experienced through living in an adopted country.
- Writing and professionally publishing poetry and memoirs about the pride, aspirations, interests, concerns and struggles of working-class life.
- Starting a community action group to help protect their local docklands site.

- In response to discussing local papers and recorded interviews, reading the memoirs and biographies of others, analysing and discussing historical documents, watching movies and documentaries, and by listening to guest speakers and performers, students write narratives, poems and diary entries as a way of showing respectful connection, 'imaginative empathy' and human solidarity with the subject or people being studied.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; read, share, think and talk about writing

Laman, T., Davis, T., Henderson, J., (2018) "My Hair has a Lot of Stories!": Unpacking Culturally Sustaining Writing Pedagogies in an Elementary Mediated Field Experience for Teacher Candidates, *Action in Teacher Education*, 40:4, 374-390

In this research study, teacher candidates learnt 'what is possible rather than what is typical' in an economically-deprived urban school. The teachers were able to reflect on their own deficit perspectives and assumptions about race, class, and the lives of children and their families within the local school community. By the end of the study, the pre-service teachers felt better able to identify and encourage children to use their own existing social, cultural and linguistic resources. As part of the study, a class of 7-8 year old majority African-American children were invited to write in personal response to the book *Hair Dance* by Dinah Johnson. The children were able to quickly identify themselves and their local community within the pages of the book. Children used intertextuality to connect the book's theme to their own identities, cultures and lives. For example, some boys wrote about visits to the local barbershop, whilst many girls considered the ritual of having their hair did by aunts, grandmothers and mothers.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; connecting reading and writing; intertextuality

Lensmire, T. (1998) Rewriting student voice, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 30(3), 261–291.

Progressive and radical visions of education have accorded student voice an important place in their critiques of traditional schooling and their proposals for change. In this paper, Lensmire examines and criticises two popular conceptions of student voice:

- *Voice as individual expression* is put forward by advocates of writing workshop approaches to the teaching of writing. Workshop advocates emphasise students' desire to express their unique selves in writing, and how traditional instruction frustrates this desire.
- *Voice as participation* comes from advocates of critical pedagogy. These advocates call for critical dialogues among teachers and students, within which student voices would sound and be heard.

Lensmire concludes his paper by sketching an alternative conception, one that affirms the strengths of these previous versions, as well as responds to their weaknesses. He proposes that voice be conceived of as a project involving appropriation, social struggle and becoming. He envisions student voice in a way that more adequately recognizes the interactional and ideological complexities of student expression, so that we might, as educators and researchers, better support the flourishing of student voices in schools.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Lewison, M., Heffernan, L., (2008) Rewriting Writers Workshop: Creating Safe Spaces for Disruptive Stories, *Research in the Teaching of English*, 42(4) pp.435-465

This case-study explores a teacher of 8-9 year olds' use of a critical writing pedagogy to encourage students' exploration of issues that were important in their lives from personal as well as social perspectives. Pupils read, discussed and then wrote in personal response to picture books carrying social and political themes such as racism, classism and ageism. By writing in personal response, the class was able to create a collective response and in the process became 'a writing collective'. Many children explored the theme of bullying and used their writing to call for social action against the dominant school culture.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of

Comber, B., Thomson, P., Wells, M. (2001) Critical literacy finds a “place”: Writing & social action in a low-income Australian grade 2/3 classroom, *The Elementary School Journal*, 101(4) pp.451-464

In this study, Comber, Thomson & Wells present the work of a teacher and their grade 2-3 class in a low-income Australian community. The class became involved in a “local urban renewal project” and used writing as a means to engage with both personal and local issues. They use this example of practice to argue that “school children can acquire literate practices that combine production, design, and communication in a variety of modes, through a range of media, and further, that such practices can connect them with community members about matters of immediate significance” (p. 453). By doing this, the authors are able to illustrate how children’s identities, experiences, and concerns are intrinsically linked to their ‘place’ in the world – locally and globally, geographically and socially. Furthermore, they advocate for the critical text production by children as a means for them to build their agency, social consciousness, and civic participation. One example includes the series of prompts provided to learners that “invited the children to move from the personal, to the local, to the global” (p.455):

- The best things in their lives
- What made them really happy, worried, or angry
- What they would wish for if they could have three wishes
- What they would change about their neighbourhood, school, and world
- Whether they thought young people had the power to change things

These prompts therefore served as a teaching tool that could draw learners’ opinions, feelings, experiences and ideas out and into the learning space.

Free access (if read online): [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Leung, C., Hicks, J. (2014) Writer identity and writing workshop a future teacher and teacher educator critically reflect, *Writing & Pedagogy*, 6(3), 583–605

Students currently attending colleges and universities in the United States were in elementary school when writing workshop was first introduced as a teaching method.

In this article an undergraduate honours student and a literacy teacher educator critically reflect on the student’s second grade experiences with writing workshop and identify the features of this teaching method that led to her development of a writer’s identity. Through autobiography and retrospective analysis of primary data, they argue that tone, the basic elements of writing workshop of time, choice, and process; a literature-rich environment; and a community focus contributed to the development of a writerly identity.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; connecting reading and writing; be a writer-teacher; be reassuringly consistent; writing process

Furman, C. (2017) Ways of knowing: Implications of writing curriculum in an early childhood classroom, *Curriculum Inquiry*, 47:3 pp.246-262

In this paper, the writer draws on her experience of teaching writing to 6-8 year olds in a socially and ethnically very diverse classroom. She describes how a group of children, all of whom she knew faced significant challenges at home, struggled or actively refused to write when the genre in focus was that of personal narrative. In response to this situation and on the basis of her general observation that all the children enjoyed writing fiction, she decided to give them the freedom to write in that genre once they had finished their personal narratives.

She found that all the children readily participated in writing fictional stories, and was struck by the extent to which they included elements of themselves and their lives in the narratives. Crucially, she observed that those particular children who had resisted writing their personal history now wrote themselves willingly into their fantasies as key characters in positions of influence. The stories were akin to ‘social dreaming’. Fiction appeared to be a mode of self-expression which offered them many rewards, including the possibility of visualising different worlds and providing them with a more empowering way of describing their realities. It appeared that the children were taking ‘a seed of truth’ – something about themselves – and growing out of it a fictional story. The implication for teachers is that they can:

- Offer children more freedom to write about themselves in ways they feel most comfortable with.

- Enjoy and celebrate the fact that children may choose to write personal narrative in a fictional mode and in the process feel themselves to be more empowered and agentic.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; connecting reading and writing

Seban, D., Tavsanli, Ö. (2015). Children's sense of being a writer: Identity construction in second grade writers workshop, *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 7(2), 217–234.

Writing projects in which children can invest part of themselves create spaces for them to construct their identity as readers/writers and build their personal theories of literacy. This study presents the identity construction of second grade students who identified as successful, average or struggling in their first time engagement with writing workshops. Writing as a process approach in which students practised drafting, sharing, editing and publishing their pieces of writing were implemented during a year. 27 second grade students were interviewed at the end of the school year. Analysis of the data revealed that students conceptualised identity under four dimensions:

- Purposeful and authentic writing projects
- Views about writers/writing
- Using the writing processes
- Self Efficacy and self-regulation in writing

Involvement in a writing workshop approach influences students' identity as writers. Children's perceptions of themselves also plays a role in their engagement in literacy learning especially writing and identity construction.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing workshop; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; teach the writing processes; self-efficacy; self-regulation

Zumbrunn, S., Ekholm, E., Stringer J.K., McKnight, K., DeBusk-Lane, M. (2017) Student experiences with writing: Taking the temperature of the classroom, *The Reading Teacher*, 70(6), 667–677

This article offers insights into students' perceptions of writing through the use of drawings and written responses. In this study of fifth graders across two schools, students were prompted to draw a picture about a recent experience with writing and how that experience made them feel. Students were then asked to write a description of their drawings.

The authors studied the features in the drawings and the written responses. Findings highlighted the range of both positive and negative experiences with writing as well as a realistic tool for literacy teachers to use to 'take the temperature of their classroom'.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity

Lensmire, T. (1993) Following the Child, Socioanalysis, and Threats to Community: Teacher Response to Children's Texts, *Curriculum Inquiry*, 23:3, 265–299

In this paper, teacher-researcher Timothy Lensmire investigates the social life of his writing workshop classroom. He discusses his desire to create a writing community which allows for personal ownership and individual exploration of writing topics whilst at the same time promoting a sense of public participation and responsibility towards others. He observes that giving children agency over their writing topics isn't without risk as children grow up in a sexist, racist and classist society and they can bring this into the writing classroom. Lensmire discusses how his young writing community began to fracture into gender and social-class lines with boys working with boys, girls working with girls, and children from the local trailer park finding themselves at the bottom of peer writing hierarchies. The core of the paper details a particularly difficult occasion for teacher response: a popular child wanted to publish a fictional narrative that the teacher read as an attack on an unpopular classmate.

Lensmire reflects on the fact that children's writing choices must, at times, be questioned if they run the risk of upholding offensive stereotypes, or alienating their peers. He argues that learners must engage in discussion about the moral and political aspects of their texts and that they can't accept the authorial rights of writing workshop without also accepting their responsibilities to the rest of their writing community.

The paper exposes the importance of teachers supporting and questioning children's texts through a critically pragmatic approach. The essential nature of teachers promoting a loving writing community based on friendship, engagement and social energy is also discussed.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; writing realities; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Subero, D., Vujasinović E., Esteban-Guitart, M., (2016) Mobilising funds of identity in and out of school, *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 47(2), 247–263.

This article, using examples from classroom practice, makes the claim that children and young people need to become a generation of knowledge creators and not simply knowledge acquirers if they are to succeed as writers in our globalised 21st century life. Learners spend 81% of their time in informal learning situations. However, the learning that takes place in these situations is rarely utilised by teachers; particularly teachers of ethnic minority pupils or pupils who come from low-income backgrounds, despite what we know about the major educational and affective benefits of inviting children's funds of knowledge and identities to meet the school curriculum. Subero and his colleagues share how teachers investigated the knowledge, skills and resources of families and the local community in order to bridge the gap between writing in school and learners' lives. Teachers also investigated their students' talents, passions, cultures, local heroes and interests as sources for writing material. They did this by:

- Setting up a home-school knowledge exchange project which involved 'all about me' shoeboxes being sent home and filled with artefacts, drawings and symbols that were significant to them. For example: photos, objects, trinkets, toys, postcards, books and magazines.
- Producing identity texts. Learners were invited to create a written, spoken, visual or musical piece which had part of their identity invested in it. They wrote on themes such as: the history of their family, documentaries and interviews with people from their neighbourhoods, and dual-language texts discussing their migration story.
- Publishing a fairy-tale anthology. Learners were asked to gather folk and fairy-tales from their countries of origin and to use them to create an anthology of dual-language tales for the school and public library.
- Creating video documentaries. Learners were given recording equipment to take home and create documentaries detailing aspects of their home lives and activities.
- Crafting autobiographies. Pupils took part in open-ended interviews with their peers, and were asked to write diary entries, bring in family artefacts, create maps and timelines, collect photographs and paint self-portraits before producing an autobiography of their lives so far.

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Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing workshop; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; teach the writing processes; self-efficacy; self-regulation

Hoewisch, A. (2001) 'Do I have to have a princess in my story?': Supporting children's writing of fairytales, *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 17, 249–277

This collaborative case-study involved a teacher educator working alongside three preservice teachers. Children who are viewed as 'linguistically lacking' by their teachers face additional hurdles to writing. Topics that culturally and linguistically diverse children select may be considered less worthy by teachers who are more familiar and comfortable with white middle-class values.

As part of the project, children were read a number of fairy-tales before engaging in conversations about the similarities and differences between the tales and their own lives. They were invited to draw in personal response to the fairy-tales. They also received regular responsive mini-lessons on various writing processes, skills and strategies. When the children subsequently wrote their own fairy-tales, they used intertextuality to a high degree of sophistication and produced better texts. The children also used personally meaningful experiences not often broached in their school writing to build their own fairy-tales. For example they wove into their tales:

- Famous singers they admired
- Doing magic with friends
- Going to parties
- Divorce
- The death of a relative
- Separation from parents
- Gang violence, police raids and drug deals

According to Hoewisch, giving children the responsibility to choose their own topics 'led to some uncomfortable moments' for the teachers. They stated that some children brainstormed characters and events

that they felt were 'violent or just plain gross', and wondered what to do when a child decides that the police or their teachers are the bad guys. The teachers found themselves in a difficult situation of privately criticising the lived experiences or interests of their pupils. However, they knew they must give feedback which in no way devalued children's 'ideas, lives, interests and writing decisions'. In this case, of course, they were able to reflect on the fact that traditional fairy-tales incorporate their own brutality, and that the children were simply upholding these traditional textual features using contemporary life. Furthermore, they felt that acknowledging and accepting children's writing choices led them towards new understandings about their students. It was concluded that the children were able to successfully combine their newly-acquired knowledge of the genre with content they were interested in writing about and were knowledgeable of, which served the purpose and audience for the writing project.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: building a community of writers; writer-identity; agency; writing realities; culturally sustaining pedagogy; intertextuality; literacy for pleasure: connect reading and writing; genre study

Kissel, B., Miller, E. (2015) Reclaiming power in the writers' workshop: defending curricula countering narratives, and changing identities in prekindergarten classrooms, *The Reading Teacher*, 69(1) pp.77-86

In this article, Kissel & Miller examine how young writers and their teachers transformed their writing curriculum by using the writer's workshop approach.

They present three narratives in which multiple pre-kindergarten teachers used their power within the Writer's Workshop to:

- Ensure writing was a daily practice in pre-kindergarten classrooms
- Write about stories often censored in early childhood classrooms
- Claim new writing identities

The two classrooms they describe used similar pedagogical structures to teach writing following the decades-old traditions of Writer's Workshop; however, they found that what happened within those traditions—among children, teachers, and school administrators—transformed contemporary practices of literacy education. All three stories share a common thread; when positioned within the structure of a Writer's Workshop, young authors and their teachers claim power and, ultimately, assert their voices.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; writer identity; be reassuringly consistent; writing workshop; creating a community of writers; purposeful and authentic writing projects; early writers; emergent writers

Helsel, L., Kelly, K., Wong, K. (2021) Responsive Teaching in the Writer's Workshop, *The Reading Teacher*, doi.org/10.1002/trtr.2074

This article shares how a class of 8-9 year olds became a community of independent and collaborative writers who flourish through a responsive and culturally sustaining approach to writers' workshop. This includes:

- Providing daily and dedicated time for writing
- Honouring children's writing choices
- Providing daily writing instruction which is responsive to what the class needs instruction in most.
- Providing children with additional instruction and feedback through pupil conferences

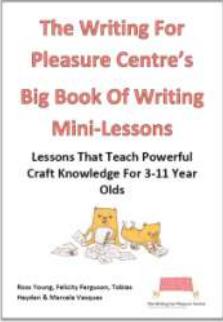
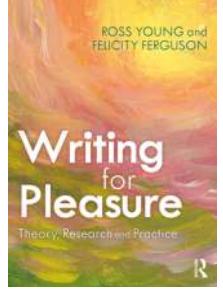
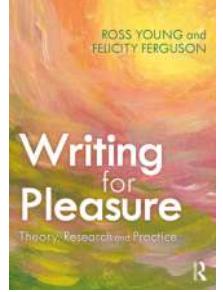
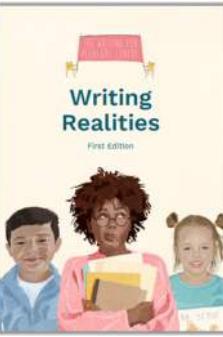
The authors then share the four ways in which teachers can be responsive to the needs of their students. These include:

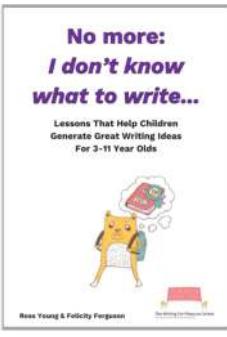
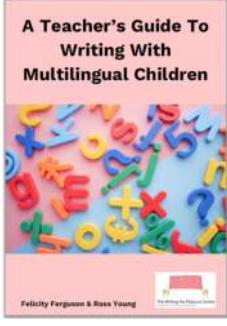
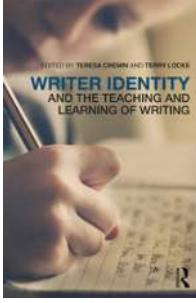
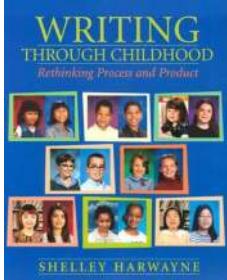
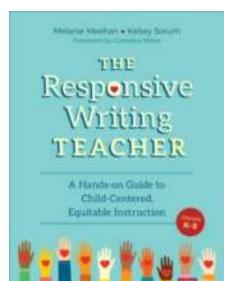
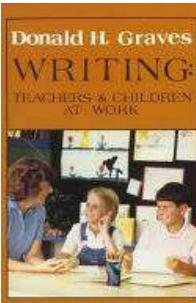
- **Academic responsiveness:** Ensuring that skills and content align with students' abilities and curriculum goals.
- **Linguistic responsiveness:** Valuing the languages and dialects of students.
- **Cultural responsiveness:** Valuing the social and cultural identities and cultural capital of students.
- **Social-emotional responsiveness:** Providing a safe and loving environment for children to take risks, write and be writers.

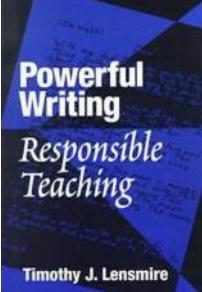
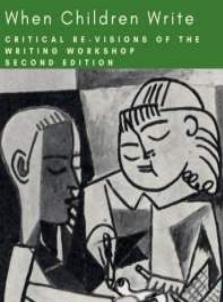
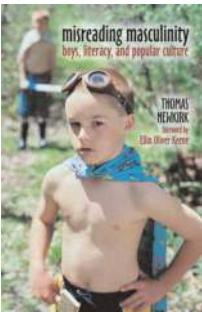
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Tags: read, share, think and talk about writing; treat every child as a writer; building a community of writers; pupil conferencing; culturally sustaining pedagogy; responsive teaching; writing instruction; writing workshop; linguistics; agency mini-lesson; be reassuringly consistent; writer-identity; motivation; translanguaging; funds of knowledge; funds of identity

Recommended chapters and literature

	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F., Hayden, T., Vasques, M. (2021) The Writing For Pleasure Centre's BIG Book Of Mini-Lessons: Lessons That Teach Powerful Craft Knowledge For 3-11 Year Olds [LINK]</p>
	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2021) 'Agency' In <i>Writing For Pleasure</i> London: Routledge [LINK]</p> <p>This chapter discusses the affective domain agency, which can also be described as personal control, epistemic agency, personal and collective responsibility, or agentic learning, and is, in the context of writing, about having choice, freedom, autonomy, and ownership of writing ideas, writing processes, and even how you are taught. Agency is a vital force in increasing writers' engagement and their writing performance. Theory, research, and educational practices associated with developing children's agency in writing and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are explored within this chapter. This includes discussion of the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers who are provided with high and low levels of agency. Finally, the authors describe the relationship between developing apprentice writers' agency and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching. They give examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.</p>
	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2021) 'Volition' In <i>Writing For Pleasure</i> London: Routledge [LINK]</p> <p>This chapter discusses the affective domain volition, which is defined as the need, desire, urge, or the internal compulsion to write, sometimes described as purposive striving or personal endorsement. The authors present evidence which shows how engagement of volition stimulates apprentice writers' desire to harness the knowledge and skills necessary for the creation of excellent written texts. Theory, research, and educational practices associated with developing children's volition to write and its important role in developing confident and effective writers are also explored in this chapter. Consideration is given to the typical behaviours witnessed in a rich variety of educational research and differences observed in the behaviour of pupil-writers who feel high or low levels of volition. Finally, the authors describe the relationship between apprentice writers' volition to write and the 14 principles of effective writing teaching. Included are examples of the kinds of instructional practice carried out by the most effective teachers of writing.</p>
	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F., Kaufman, D., Govender, N. (2022) <i>Writing Realities</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]</p>

	<p>Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2022) <i>No More: I Don't Know What To Write... Lessons That Help Children Generate Great Writing Ideas</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]</p>
	<p>Ferguson, F., Young, R. (2022) <i>A Teacher's Guide To Writing With Multilingual Children</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]</p>
	<p>Cremin, T., Locke, T. (2017) <i>Writer-identity and the teaching and learning of writing</i> London: Routledge</p>
	<p>Harwayne, S. (2001) <i>Writing Through Childhood: Rethinking Process & Product</i> Portsmouth NH: Heinemann</p>
	<p>Meehan, M., Sorum, K. (2021) <i>The Responsive Writing Teacher: A Hands On Guide To Child-Centred Equitable Instruction</i> USA: Corwin</p>
	<p>Gaves, D. (1983). <i>Writing: Teachers and Children at Work</i>. Exeter, NH: Heinemann</p>

	<p>Lensmire, T. (2000/2024). Powerful writing, Responsible teaching. New York: Teachers College Press. Open access second edition</p>
	<p>Lensmire, T. (1994/2023). When children write: Critical re-visions of the writing workshop. New York: Teachers College Press. Open access second edition</p>
	<p>Newkirk, T. (2002). <i>Misreading Masculinity: Boys, Literacy, And Popular Culture</i> USA: Heinemann</p>
	<p>Chetty, D., & Sands-O'Connor, K. (2025). <i>Beyond The Secret Garden</i>. English & Media Centre.</p>

Chapter 8

Children's views on writing, being writers and writing teaching

Bonafede, F., C. Clark, I. Picton, and A. Cole. 2025. Children and Young People's Writing in School in 2025. London: National Literacy Trust.

This National Literacy Trust report examines the current state of writing engagement among students aged 8 to 18 in the UK. The data reveals a significant decline in both the enjoyment of writing and the frequency of daily writing for pleasure, hitting the lowest levels recorded in fifteen years.

The study explores various psychosocial factors, noting that many students experience anxiety regarding failure and technical accuracy while often writing solely to meet teacher expectations. Conversely, the findings highlight that providing creative agency and the freedom to choose relevant topics can effectively boost student motivation.

To improve outcomes, the authors suggest shifting toward a more supportive emotional landscape in classrooms that prioritises self-expression and personal connection to the craft. Ultimately, the research calls for a reimagined curriculum that balances structural rigour with the intrinsic rewards of writing to foster more confident young writers.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: children's voice; children's views on writing; motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; writing enjoyment; writing for pleasure; free writing; pursue personal writing projects; engagement

González-Díaz, V., Parr, E., and Nourie, K. (2025) Using constructs of 'good' writing to develop 'a voice of one's own' in the primary school classroom. *Literacy*, 59: 34–54.

This research paper examines how broadening children's understanding of "good writing" can help primary school pupils in England develop a stronger writer identity. The authors observe that current educational assessments often force a narrow focus on technical skills like grammar and punctuation, which can stifle creativity and make students feel alienated from their work.

By implementing a teacher-led professional development programme, the study encouraged a more holistic approach that prioritises authorial voice, creative choice, and reader engagement. Results indicated that when students moved beyond a purely skills-based view, they gained greater self-efficacy and a better sense of ownership over their personal writing style. Ultimately, the paper argues that developing a diverse range of writing constructs is essential for helping children find a unique "voice of one's own" in the classroom.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: children's voice; children's views on writing; writer-identity; self-efficacy; teach the writing processes; pursue personal writing projects; presentational-skills orientation; writing assessment

Young, R., Ramdarshan-Bold, M., Clark, C., and McGeown, S. (2025) 'It's healthy. It's good for you': Children's perspectives on utilising their autonomy in the writing classroom. *Literacy*, 59: 372–384.

This research study investigates how pupil autonomy affects the writing motivation of primary school children in England, specifically using self-determination theory as a framework.

By interviewing students aged 9–11, the authors identified three distinct pedagogical environments: teacher-controlled, student-controlled, and collaboratively-controlled writing.

While some pupils find comfort in rigid teacher guidance, many report that a lack of choice leads to disengagement and a sense of disconnection from their writing. Conversely, students often feel more passionate and confident when they are permitted to select their own topics and manage their own creative processes.

The findings suggest that a balanced approach, where teachers and students share decision-making power, is the most effective way to address declining enjoyment in writing. Ultimately, the study advocates for autonomy-supportive practices to help children develop into more competent, self-determined writers.

The following is a list of implications for practice:

- **Adopting a centralist or collaborative approach:** Educators should move towards

'collaboratively-controlled writing', where teachers and children share responsibility for the project. This balance provides the necessary guidance and instruction while allowing for personal decision-making and expression.

- **Providing a comprehensive writerly apprenticeship:** Teachers should pay close attention to the motivational needs of writers by fostering intrinsic motivation and autonomy throughout the entire writing process.
- **Establishing publishing goals:** Students should be invited to help conceptualise projects by choosing the purposes and audiences for their writing. Knowing who they are writing for and why can significantly fuel their motivation.
- **Co-constructing product goals:** Rather than using predefined success criteria, teachers should invite children to contribute to the development of rubrics and product goals. This allows children to help define what competency looks like, making the work feel more meaningful.
- **Supporting autonomous idea generation:** For students who find choosing a topic overwhelming, teachers should provide explicit instruction and feedback on idea-generation techniques. This includes drawing on external inspirations such as peers, popular culture, books, and videogames.
- **Granting autonomy over the writing process:** Children should have the freedom to manage their own production strategies and drafting styles. This includes choosing when to proofread or deciding between styles such as being a 'discoverer' (developing ideas through the act of writing) or a 'sentence stacker' (revising sentence by sentence).
- **Sufficiently scaffolding autonomy:** It is crucial that autonomy-supportive practices are properly scaffolded to ensure students have positive experiences and do not feel overwhelmed by too many choices.
- **Utilising 'funds of identity':** Practice should allow students to draw on their personal knowledge, interests, and passions. This leads to writing that is not only academically successful but also socially and personally meaningful to the child.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: agency; generating ideas; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; culturally sustaining pedagogy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; community and environmental orientation; writing workshop; autonomy-supportive practices; collaboratively-controlled writing

Khosronejad, M., Ryan, M., Barton, G., & Kervin, L. (2023). "I get all my ideas from the tree": investigating elementary students' views as reflexive writers. *Research Papers in Education*, 38(2), 227-249.

Despite the importance of writing skills to school and life success, there is scant research into the enabling and constraining conditions that shape elementary students' views about their writing practices. This paper examines students' views about writing through the lens of reflexivity theory. Applying an explanatory sequential model of mixed-method design, it first describes the development of a self-report questionnaire to investigate the views of 570 elementary students about themselves as writers. Second, it draws on semi-structured interviews with 46 students across Years 3 to 6.

The results show that the majority of students see themselves as autonomous and meta-reflexive writers. In addition, results indicate time, teacher pedagogy and the place to practise writing as contextual conditions experienced by learners and place an emphasis on the personal conditions such as students' lack of confidence, persistence and ideas. We discuss implications for further practice in elementary schools.

£: [LINK](#)

Tags: Reflexive writers; elementary writers; writing dialogues; writing pedagogy; formative assessment; writer identity; pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching

Ryan, M., Khosronejad, M., Barton, G., Myhill, D., & Kervin, L. (2022). Reflexive writing dialogues: Elementary students' perceptions and performances as writers during classroom experiences. *Assessing writing*, 51, 100592.

The ways in which we approach the process of writing can tell us much about our confidence, linguistic and textual knowledge, and our desire to please self or others through language. School writing often focuses on the process and product of writing, rather than the conditions that shape how we make decisions when writing for an authentic purpose and audience. This paper uses reflexivity theory, including an innovative Reflexive Writing Instrument (RWI), along with critical discourse analysis, to interrogate elementary students' decisions-making modes in writing and how these align with teachers' views, classroom experiences and writing outcomes. Findings show that students can have different perceptions than their teachers about their approach to writing, but the conditions that teachers enable can influence students' decision-making modes. We argue that the RWI can be used to prompt reflexive writing dialogues so that formative assessment can be nuanced to support individual students' reflexive writing modes, ensuring improved results and enjoyment of writing.

Free: [LINK](#)

Tags: Reflexive writers; elementary writers; writing dialogues; writing pedagogy; formative assessment; writer identity; pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching

Kokotsaki, D. (2022). Pupils' views about their learning in writing: a qualitative study of a primary school in the North East of England, *Education 3-13*, 50(2), 252-266.

This study aims to explore pupils' views on writing in primary school through focus group interviews conducted in the North East of England with children aged 7-11 years old. Pupils' views templates were used to stimulate children's ideas about their thoughts and feelings towards writing and acted as a starting point for discussion. All children demonstrated an ability to be involved in a meta-writing discussion where they reflected on their writing, their strengths, weaknesses and their plans to further improve their writing skills. A certain level of awareness about writing was exhibited by all children, however, the more enthusiastic and more able writers had specific strategies in place to take their writing forward. These findings are discussed in terms of their practical implications for pupils' writing development.

£: [LINK](#)

Tags: Children's views on writing teaching; pupil voice; reflective thinking; strategic thinking; metacognition

Timperley, H., Parr, J. (2009) What is this lesson about? Instructional processes and student understandings in writing classrooms, *The Curriculum Journal*, 20:1, 43-60, DOI: 10.1080/09585170902763999

This article examines the extent to which classroom instruction conveyed challenging learning goals in writing through a range of teaching activities and how well the participating students understood those goals. We report an empirical study that examined the quality of writing instructional goals, how well they were conveyed to students through lesson activities and how the students came to understand them. Two different but converging theoretical perspectives of self-regulated learning and formative assessment were used as an analytical framework. Teachers' instructional practices during writing lessons were audio-taped in 17 different classrooms and a sample of students subsequently interviewed to assess their understanding of the dimensions of interest. The conditions monitored included the extent to which the lesson aims and mastery criteria were made explicit and how well feedback was aligned to those lesson aims. In most classes, students' interview responses reflected the extent to which teachers were explicit in these aspects of instructional practice. In general, when lesson aims and mastery criteria were unclear, students identified surface features of writing as their learning aims. When these lesson attributes were clearly articulated by the teacher, students were able to identify deeper features of writing as the lesson aims. When the aims were clear but the mastery criteria and lesson activities were misaligned, however, students identified surface features of writing as the lesson aims, rather than those articulated by the teacher.

£: [LINK](#)

Tags: formative assessment; self-regulated learning; student learning; writing instruction

Wray, D. (1993). What do children think about writing?, *Educational review*, 45(1), 67-77.

This article reports on a study of junior school childrens' thoughts about the writing done in their classrooms. Four hundred and seventy five children, ranging from seven to eleven years old, were asked to write to a younger child explaining what he/she would have to do to do good writing in their class. The resulting pieces are analysed for their references to particular features of writing. At a simple level of analysis the pieces show a group of children who are extremely concerned with the technical skills of writing and not so concerned with compositional aspects. By looking at the differences in the concerns expressed at different ages, a more complex explanation is put forward for this apparent over concern. Some implications for theories of literacy development are suggested.

475 children (aged 7-11 yrs) were asked to write to a younger child explaining what he/she would have to do to do good writing in their class. The resulting writing samples were analysed for their references to particular features of writing. Initially, it seemed that the children were extremely concerned with the technical skills of writing and not so concerned with compositional aspects. However, by looking at the differences in the concerns expressed at different ages, a more complex explanation is put forward for this apparent overconcern. These children, in giving advice about writing, may have mentioned more readily aspects that were particularly bothering them at the time.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: children's views on writing; pupil voice; balance composition and transcription

Wray, D., J. Medwell. (2006). Pupils' Perspectives on Literacy Teaching, *Education* 34 (3): 201–210. doi:10.1080/03004270600898661.

The views of the learners are arguably the most important consideration in planning for classroom literacy instruction, yet they are often ignored by policy-makers and by teachers. In order to match the literacy curriculum to the learners, it is essential for teachers to consider the programmes they offer from the learners' points of view. This article begins an exploration of some of what is known about learners' perspectives on literacy and literacy teaching, presenting some preliminary findings of a research study into pupils' views of the literacy hour.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: children's views on writing; pupil voice

Kotula, A. W., Tivnan, T., & Aguilar, C. M. (2014). *Students' Voices: The Relationship Between Attitudes and Writing Outcomes for Fourth and Fifth Graders*. Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.

As part of a four-year research project to study a writing curriculum for fourth- and fifth-grade students, the authors measured students' writing ability and their attitudes about writing to determine the relationship between the two variables. A principal component analysis of the 18-item attitude survey indicated three composites with eigenvalues above 1.0, and these showed reasonable levels of internal consistency reliability: (1) the Perceived Value of Writing; (2) Self-Rating as a Writer; and (3) Writing Behaviours. A small but consistent relationship was found between each component and writing outcomes, with a slightly stronger relationship at the end of the year, especially for the Self-Rating as a Writer component. This adds to the convergence of evidence about the relationship between attitudes about writing and writing ability despite the different ways in which researchers define or measure attitudes. Moreover, this study confirms this relationship with students who came from primarily high-poverty homes and were on average poor writers. About half of the students were Hispanic, with 32% either receiving Limited English Proficiency services at the time of the study or up to two years prior to it. Because the authors collected writing and attitude data at both the beginning and end of the year, they were able to determine that student attitudes about writing did not get stronger on average after a year of writing instruction, even though the correlations between writing ability and attitudes tended to be a little higher at the end of the year. Girls had significantly more positive attitudes than boys on all three components in both fall and spring of both grades. They were also better writers.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: Pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching; writing attitudes

Birnbaum, C. (1980). Why should I write? Environmental influences on children's views of writing. *Theory Into Practice*, 19(3), 202-210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405848009542900>

Research studies underline the differences in backgrounds for proficient writers and for non proficient writers. Proficient writers tend to have had role models in family members whom they had observed engaging in composition. In addition, "good writers" tend to receive more encouragement in their efforts at composition from parents and teachers.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: Motivation; Emergent writing; Children's voices; Teacher reflection; Pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Hall, A. H., White, K. M., Guo, Y., & Emerson, A. (2019). Who counts as a writer? Examining child, teacher, and parent perceptions of writing. *Early Child Development and Care*, 189(3), 353-375.

The current study used a mixed method design with 245 preschool children, 255 teachers, and 156 parents.

Researchers interviewed children and surveyed teachers and parents about their perceptions of preschool children's writing abilities and developmental writing stages. The results of the study showed that each group defined writing differently and parents were less likely to have positive perceptions about preschool children's writing abilities than children and teachers. Correlation analysis demonstrated that teacher and parent perceptions of children's writing abilities were not related to children's own perceptions of their writing abilities in this study. This study illuminates that alignment of home and school writing practices could be improved through parent education about developmental writing stages, by asking children about their own writing perceptions, and by encouraging sharing between parents and teachers about their home and school practices and philosophies related to writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: Writing; early childhood; preschool; emergent literacy

Scheuer, N., de la Cruz, M., Pozo, J. I., Echenique, M., & Márquez, M. S. (2009). Kindergarten and primary school children's implicit theories of learning to write. *Research Papers in Education*, 24(3), 265-285.

This paper studies the process of learning to write from an insider perspective, by adopting the framework of implicit theories of learning. Twenty children in grades kindergarten – seventh grade (n=160) in Argentina were individually interviewed. Main questions explored children's accounts of their learning activity, learning difficulties and awareness of learning in the field of writing. The textual transcriptions of their oral responses were analysed with the lexicometric method. Results indicate an early shift from a direct theory of learning to write to an interpretative one revealing increasing complexity, dynamisation and internalisation of learning agency.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writing; learning; implicit theories; development

Kos, R. Maslowski, C. (2001) Second Graders' Perceptions of What Is Important in Writing, *The Elementary School Journal*, 101:5, 567-584

Studied children's perceptions of what constitutes good writing to see how those might better inform the teacher's instruction. Found that when supported by peers and teachers, the children were able to balance their need to produce conventionally correct writing with their need to make writing interesting to themselves and others.

In this teacher-generated study we explored 15 children's perceptions of what constituted good writing to see how those might better inform the teacher's instruction. Transcripts of audiotaped data, including students' responses to interviews early and late in the 5-month study and student and teacher talk during small-group classroom writing sessions, were analysed for children's perceptions of what was important in writing.

Analyses revealed that during interviews children focused on the conventions of writing (i.e., handwriting, spelling, and mechanics) as indicators of "good" writing. However, the children's conversations while writing reflected more emphasis on idea generation, planning, and organisation of stories and growing awareness of ownership and audience needs.

The data indicated that children recognized a need to become proficient in the conventions of writing. However, when provided with scaffolded writing situations, the children talked about expanded indicators of good writing. When supported by peers and teachers, the children were able to balance their need to produce conventionally correct writing with their need to make writing interesting to themselves and others.

£: [LINK](#)

Tags: writing perceptions; children's views on writing; student voice

Healey, B. (2019). How Children Experience Creative Writing in the Classroom, *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 42 (3): 184–194.

The structure of a child's writing experience stems from the affect, embodiment and materiality of their immediate engagement with activities in the classroom. When a child's movements and emotions are restricted, so too is their writing. This engagement shapes the experiential landscape of classroom writing, and the way that children perceive, value and feel about writing affects their motivation which predicts their writing attainment.

This paper reveals the structure of children's consciousness while expressing ideas through creative writing. It does so by presenting an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the writing experience in the classroom. In the study, eight Year 6 (11-12 years old) children from a school in Perth, Australia were interviewed and qualitative data were analysed to interpret the essential components of the writing experience. The results produced three main themes (sub-themes noted in brackets):

- The Writing World (Watching, Ideas from Elsewhere, Flowing);
- The Self (Concealing & Revealing, Agency, Adequacy);
- Schooled Writing (Standards, Satisfying Task Requirements, Rules of Good Writing).

The themes indicate a binary experience of writing where the child's consciousness shifts between their imagination (The Writing World) and the task before them (Schooled Writing), and each affects the way the

experience of the self appears to the writer. When comparing the experience with that of authors, one notices that the experience of words as authorial tools is missing. The results imply that the writing environment, and the individual's response to it, may restrict the engagement and the phenomenality of writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching; writer-identity; creative writing; imaginative writing

Jeffery, J. V., & Wilcox, K. (2014). How do I do it if I don't like writing?: Adolescents' stances toward writing across disciplines, *Reading and Writing*, 27, 1095-1117.

This research embedded in the National Study of Writing Instruction examines higher- and lower-achieving adolescents' stances toward content-area writing through a qualitative discourse analysis of interviews with 40 students in California, Kentucky, New York, and Texas secondary schools. The study asked: (1) How do students' stances toward writing compare in general and across disciplines? (2) How do stances compare among middle and high school students and among students with different achievement histories? Results suggest that adolescents generally hold positive attitudes toward writing that allows for the expression of subjective stances, which they report is more commonly assigned in English language arts classrooms. Implications for the adoption of new US standards for disciplinary writing are discussed.

£: [LINK](#)

Tags: Pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching; adolescents; discourse analysis; social constructivism; writing pedagogy; disciplinary literacy

Chai, H. (2010) Adolescent Girl Writers: "I can be good at it, if I like it", *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, 23 (1) p29-40

A common perception that girls are good at writing may lead educators to overlook girls. This study examined the writing engagement of three sixth grade girls and how their writing self-perception affected their attitudes in a writing classroom. Using a qualitative case study methodology, three themes emerged: the importance of writing tasks, the influence of reading interests on writing, and time as an external factor. Although these themes are important, the participants of this study alluded to a greater underlying factor; that of writing volition, i.e., desire to write. Volition was the key in engaging the girls as writers.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: gender; girl writers; pupil voice; self-efficacy; children's views on writing; adolescent writers

Zaragoza, N., & Vaughn, S. (1995). Children teach us to teach writing, *The Reading Teacher*, 49(1), 42-47.

Interviewed children to ascertain their perceptions of how to teach writing effectively. Children suggested a whole host of evidence-based recommendations.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writing perceptions; children's views on writing; student voice; evidence-based writing teaching

Knudson, R. E. (1995). Writing experiences, attitudes, and achievement of first to sixth graders. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 89(2), 90-97.

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship of writing achievement and attitude toward writing as well as the relationship of grade level and gender to attitude toward writing. Subjects were 430 first- to sixth-grade students. Results of the analysis of students' writing competence and their attitudes toward writing support findings of prior research, namely, that grade level, gender, and attitude toward writing are very good predictors of writing achievement. Specifically, students who are in upper grades, are female, and who have more positive attitudes toward writing are more likely to be above-average writers. As a follow-up, 12 students at each grade level were randomly selected to be interviewed regarding writing tasks and activities. Results indicate that children begin school seeing writing as drawing, move to seeing it as printing, and by Grade 6 identify writing as cursive writing; and that students would improve their writing in Grade 1 by attending to surface-level features of writing, by Grade 3 "trying harder," and by Grade 4 using specific process-writing strategies to approach the writing task.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: Pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching; writing attitudes

Martello, J. (1999) In their Own Words: Children's Perceptions of Learning to Write. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 24(3), 32–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/183693919902400307>

Research into children's writing has concentrated more on the development of competence than on children's conscious understanding about the process of learning to write. However, teachers need information about children's understanding in order to establish a foundation for new learning. For this reason the research reported here is based on interviews with school beginners about their perceptions of learning to write. The children's responses, drawing on home and school experiences, reveal their developing concepts about the nature of writing and the strategies they use when learning to write. The study showed variation in metacognitive and metalinguistic awareness, and a high degree of concurrence between the children's responses and syllabus recommendations on teaching/learning strategies for writing. Some useful teaching/learning strategies for writing instruction in the first year of school are discussed.

Twenty six 4-5 year old children in their first year of Australian school undertook semi-structured interviews. Children were also invited to write something. These writings were collected to supplement information given during interview.

£: [LINK](#)

Tags: Pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching

Myhill, D. (2001) Writing: Crafting and Creating, *English in Education*, 35:3, 13-20, DOI: 10.1111/j.1754-8845.2001.tb00744.x

This article argues, in the context of national concern about standards in writing, for a reconceptualisation of the teaching of writing that acknowledges both the significance of the writer's voice and the need to teach about how written texts create meaning. The teaching of writing requires the dual activities of creating and crafting: young writers need opportunities to express their ideas and support in developing understanding of how best to shape those ideas.

£: [LINK](#)

Tags: Creativity; linguistic features; ownership; agency; pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching; adolescents

Scherff, L., & Piazza, C. (2005). The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same: A Survey of High School Students' Writing Experiences. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 39(3), 271–304. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40171667>

In this article, we present secondary students' perceptions of their writing and writing instruction. Using the NCTE/IRA Standards as the foundation for a survey, we questioned nearly 2,000 public-school students concerning what they wrote, how they wrote, and the extent to which they wrote in their language arts classes. We chose Florida as our research site due to its nearly 30-year history of high stakes testing.

Data analysis across high schools, grade levels, and tracks showed writing instruction to be differentiated and varied, but often at odds with research-based practices. Although these data provide only one snapshot of a complex phenomenon, our findings can be understood within a wider historical-political context in which state assessments and predetermined standards potentially impact the kinds of instruction students are receiving.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: Pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching; adolescents

Werderich, D. E., & Armstrong, S. L. (2013). Examining the conceptualizations, perceptions, and practices of adolescent writers. *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 52(4), 339–373.

In this article, the authors describe a mixed-methods study in which an adapted Motivation to Write Profile (MWP)—the CLMWP—was used to investigate the conceptualizations, perceptions, and practices of adolescent writers. Results of this study suggested that participants held differing conceptualizations of writing, depending on the context. In addition, participants held differing conceptualizations of what constitutes "good writing." Specifically, other people's writing qualified as good based on reader-reception and holistic qualities of readability; by contrast, their own writing was good based on very specific, often surface-level readability skills such as word choice and spelling. We argue that a deeper understanding of adolescents' writing practices

outside of the school environment is crucial for developing confident, lifelong writers.

£: [LINK](#)

Tags: adolescents' conceptualizations; perceptions; pupil voice; children's views on writing teaching

Zumbrunn, S., Carter, Y. M., & Conklin, S. (2014). Unpacking the value of writing: Exploring college students' perceptions of writing. *Journal of Research in Education*, 24(2), 18–33

This study explored college students' beliefs about the value of writing, their past experiences with writing, and the relationship between students' prior experiences with writing and writing value beliefs. One hundred fourteen undergraduates from a public Southeastern university participated in the study. Using expectancy-value theory as a framework, structural (Saldaña, 2013) and hypothesis (Bernard, 2011) coding was used to analyse student responses.

Findings suggested that attainment, utility, and interest value aligned well with student writing value responses. Students noted both positive and negative experiences with writing. Whereas most students discussed the role of good instruction, positive role models, and constructive criticism in their positive past writing experiences, unengaging and daunting tasks were salient memories for students describing negative prior experiences with writing.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: Pupil voice; writing attitudes; pupil-conferencing; read, share think and talk about writing; explicit writing instruction; situational motivation; expectancy-value theory

Barratt-Pugh, C., Ruscoe, A., Fellowes, J. (2021) Motivation to Write: Conversations with Emergent Writers, *Early Childhood Education*, 49, 223–234

This article describes the processes and outcomes of a research project exploring children's motivation to write, undertaken by four pre-primary teachers in Western Australia.

One hundred and nine children aged between five and six years shared their views of writing in conversation with their teacher. Thematic analysis in conjunction with statistical analysis indicated that the majority of children were motivated to write. They had a positive attitude towards writing, evidenced by their self-efficacy and were developing aspects of self-determination evidenced by their sense of ownership and control of the codes of writing. They had some understanding of the value of writing as a means of supporting reading and securing a positive future, thus enhancing their motivation to write.

However, a small group of children indicated that they did not like writing, found writing hard, and did not know how or what to write. In addition, few children mentioned writing as a means of communication. The absence of purpose and audience in the children's responses was partly explained by the teachers' focus on the codes of writing, potentially impacting on children's motivation. This prompted the teachers to re-conceptualise their writing program in ways that engaged children in authentic writing tasks, while continuing to scaffold their understanding of the codes of writing.

This collaborative approach to research, in ways that privilege children's voices, has implications for informing pedagogy across a range of early childhood contexts and curriculum areas.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; self-efficacy; agency; emergent writers; early writers; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; encoding; balance composition and transcription; teach daily mini-lessons

Hall, A., Axelrod, Y. (2014) 'I am kind of a good writer and kind of not': Examining students' writing attitudes, *Journal of Research in Education*, 24(2) , 34–50.

Since writing ability has been found to be an important predictor of school success and college readiness, it is important for teachers to understand the connections between students' attitudes toward writing, writing self-efficacy, and writing achievement.

This article describes the findings from focus groups conducted with 81 students in grades K-5 during which participants discussed their attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs about writing. Focusing on the power of students' voices, this study adds a unique perspective not often found in the affective domain of writing research. Five broad themes emerged related to students' writing attitudes including children's:

- Feelings about writing

- Writing confidence
- Motivators for writing
- Writing preferences
- Responses to their teachers' influence

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic writing class projects; multimodality; generating ideas; set writing goals

Bradford, H., Wyse, D. (2013) Writing and writers: the perceptions of young children and their parents, *Early Years*, 33:3, 252-265

Over the past three decades early writing research has focused on the processes involved as children learn to write. There is now a powerful evidence base to show that children's earliest discoveries about written language are learned through active engagement with their social and cultural worlds. In addition, the idea of writing development as an emergent process is well established.

The study reported in this paper adopted a case study methodology combined with an age-appropriate data collection technique in order to explore children's perceptions of themselves as writers.

This study found that the children had clear perceptions about themselves as writers. There were important links between parents' perceptions of their children as writers and the ethos for writing they created in the home. It was found that, overall, more positive parental perceptions were linked with more attention to the meaning of children's writing. It is concluded that early years settings could usefully identify and compare children's and parents' perceptions of writing in order to enhance children's writing development.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: pursue personal writing projects; emergent writers; early writers; home literacies

Gadd, M., Parr, J., Robertson, J., Carran, L., Ali, Z., Gendall, L., Watson K. (2019) Portrait of the student as a young writer: Some student survey findings about attitudes to writing and self-efficacy as writers. *Literacy*, 53(4), 226–235

This New Zealand-based article reports on an analysis of data gathered over two years from upper primary school students on their attitudes to writing and writing instruction and their beliefs about their self-efficacy as developing writers. Conclusions (including student comments) were made about students' likes, dislikes and preferences as developing writers. Levels of association between their attitudes and gender and between their attitudes and proficiency levels were explored. Conclusions were also made about how student attitudes affect teacher practice.

(£) [LINK](#)

Tags: self-efficacy; pupil voice; children's view on writing teaching

Garrett, L., Moltzen, R. (2011). Writing because I want to, not because I have to: Young gifted writers' perspectives on the factors that "matter" in developing expertise, *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 10(1), 165–180

The study reported here sought to better understand the development of writing talent from the perspectives of a group of gifted adolescent female writers. Recent shifts in how giftedness and talent are conceptualised has led to an increased focus on domain-specific abilities and the importance of understanding how specific talents can be identified and supported.

The participants in this study were asked to reflect on the development of their interest and ability in writing over time. Emerging from their feedback were two categories of catalysts: the intrapersonal and the environmental.

For this group of students, intrapersonal catalysts were more influential to the realisation of their writing talent than environmental catalysts. This intrinsic motivation to write, and from an early age, is consistent with studies of eminent adult writers. Parents and teachers were important environmental catalysts. The participants in this study valued the input and support of teachers, particularly during the early years of their schooling. However, as they moved through the school system, these students felt the nature of the curriculum, and assessment practices increasingly threatened their intrinsic motivation for writing and diminished the satisfaction gained from writing at school.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: motivation; gender; pupil voice; children's view on teaching writing

Grainger, T., Goouch, K., Lambirth, A. (2003) Playing the game called writing, *English in Education*, 37(2), 4–15.

Teachers' perceptions of their changing practice in the context of the *National Literacy Strategy* have been well documented in recent years. However, few studies have collected pupils' views or voices. As part of a collaborative research and development project into the teaching and learning of writing, 390 primary pupils' views were collected. A marked difference in attitude to writing and self-esteem as writers was found between Key Stages 1 and 2, as well as a degree of indifference and disengagement from in-school writing for some KS2 writers. A strong desire for choice and greater autonomy as writers was expressed and a preference for narrative emerged. This part of the research project 'We're Writers' has underlined the importance of listening to pupils' views about literacy, in order to create a more open dialogue about language and learning, and to negotiate the content of the curriculum in response to their perspectives.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: writer-identity; agency; self-efficacy; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; pupil voice; children's views on writing

Jaeger, E. L. (2022) "I won't won't be writing": young authors enact meaningful work, *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 1-17

The article considers the beliefs and practices of elementary-aged children who write for personal fulfilment. The author examines the ways in which these children experienced writing and sharing their work in a voluntary after school writing workshop and at home. Data are gathered from observations of the children as they wrote and shared their ideas with peers, from interviews in which they conveyed their beliefs about and experiences with writing, and from the varied texts they composed surfaced the core aspects of meaningful work: self-development, self-expression, and unity with others. The children were aware of their individual needs as writers, they were delighted in the opportunity to control their writing activities, and they interacted with peers and family members as they produced texts.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: volition; writing for pleasure' writing as pleasure; motivation; self-determination theory; writer-identity; pursue personal writing projects; writing at home; home writing; collaborative writing; pupil voice; children's views on writing

Lambirth, A. (2016) Exploring children's discourses of writing, *English in Education*, 50(3), 215–232

This article reports on a study which was part of a two year writing project undertaken by a University in South East England with 17 primary schools. A survey sought the views of up to 565 children on the subject of writing. The analysis utilises Ivanić's (2004) discourses of writing framework as a heuristic and so provides a unique lens for a new understanding of children's ideological perspectives on writing and learning how to write. This study shows the development of learned or acquired skills and compliance discourses by the participating children within which accuracy and correctness overrides many other considerations for the use of the written word.

Free access: [LINK](#)

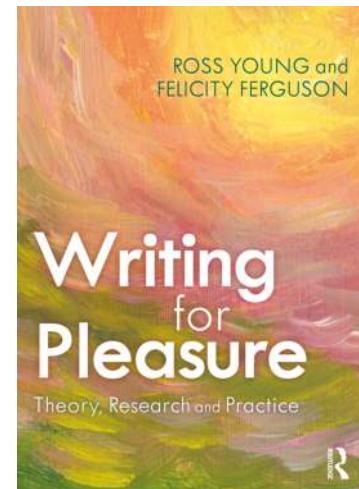
Tags: children's views on writing teaching' pupil voice; balance composition and transcription; teach the writing processes; motivation; writer-identity; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Chapter 9

The Enduring Principles Of World-Class Writing Teaching: Meta-Analysis & Case Studies

Introduction

This chapter identifies the 14 enduring principles of world-class writing teaching according to a rich review of all major meta-analysis since the 1980s. This review is supplemented by evidence taken from prominent case-studies which have looked to understand what it is the most effective teachers of writing do in their classrooms that makes the difference. The authors share instructional decisions which have a proven track record of being effective across time and context. The chapter is able to conclude that the most effective teachers of writing enact the principles of effective practice as identified in scientific study. These principles include: creating a community of writers; treating every child as a writer; reading, sharing, thinking, and talking about writing; pursuing authentic and purposeful class writing projects; pursuing personal writing projects; teaching the writing processes; setting writing goals; teaching mini-lessons; pupil conferencing; balancing composition and transcription; being a writer-teacher; being reassuringly consistent; and connecting reading and writing and interconnection of the principles. A brief description of each principle and its instructional consequences is also provided.



[DOWNLOAD CHAPTER](#)

Young, R. Ferguson, F. (2025) *The DfE's Writing Framework: Our Review And Implications For Practice* Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [Online] Available: www.writing4pleasure.com

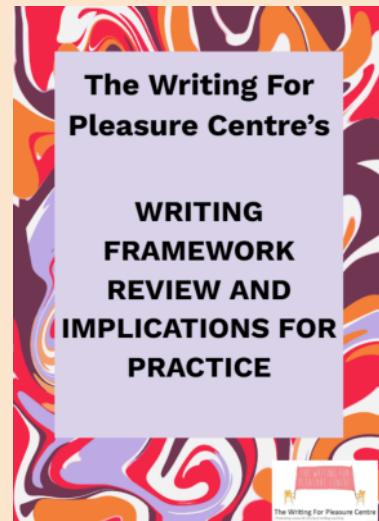
On the 8th of July 2025, the Department for Education published its non-statutory guidance document entitled *The Writing Framework*. It purports to draw from the best available evidence about teaching writing.

The mission of The Writing For Pleasure Centre is to help all young people become passionate and successful writers. As a think tank for exploring what world-class writing is and could be, a crucial part of our work is analysing emerging governmental policy. It is therefore important that we issue a response to what this document has to say.

Overall conclusion

While most of the recommendations in this policy paper are welcome, the document at times presents contradictions and remains notably incomplete.

Our aim is not to let this review slip into unproductive criticism, but rather to offer constructive additions that we hope will add value. We therefore encourage anyone seeking to develop world-class writing instruction to engage with the research cited before making changes to their teaching practices or commercial offerings.



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The aim of this booklet is to share with teachers the enduring principles of effective writing teaching. For the past fifty years research has been consistent about what world-class writing teaching involves. Despite this, we as teachers can be inundated by a variety of approaches and training, all promising a lot but often lacking the necessary grounding to be successful in the long-term. This booklet is based on extensive scientific research looking specifically at the most effective writing instruction. It concludes that there are 14 principles of effective practice. These include:

- Build a community of writers
- Treating every child as a writer
- Read, share, think and talk about writing
- Pursue authentic and purposeful class writing projects
- Pursue personal writing projects
- Teach the writing processes
- Set writing goals
- Teach mini-lessons
- Pupil conference
- Balance composition and transcription
- Be a writer-teacher
- Be reassuringly consistent
- Connecting reading and writing
- Interconnect the principles



Effective Writing Teaching

What The Research Says



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Ross Young & Felicity Ferguson

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Young, R. (2019) *What is it 'Writing For Pleasure' teachers do that makes the difference?* The University Of Sussex: The Goldsmiths' Company [Online] Available: www.writing4pleasure.com

What Is It "Writing For Pleasure" Teachers Do That Makes The Difference? was a one year research project which investigated how *Writing For Pleasure* teachers achieve writing teaching which is highly effective (greater than average progress) and also affective (pertaining to positive dispositions and feelings). This research comes at a time where we are seeing profound underachievement in writing coupled with an increase in young people's indifference or dislike for writing.

The principal purpose of this research was to identify and describe the kind of writing teaching which constitutes a *Writing For Pleasure* pedagogy. It was a requirement that the practices of the teachers participating in the research be based on what studies tell us are the most effective writing teaching, associated with high levels of pupil:

- Motivation
- Self-efficacy
- Agency
- Self-regulation
- Volition
- Writer-identity

and pleasure in writing. Teachers were also required to provide evidence of exceptional or above expected academic progress among their pupils. The research investigated the principles employed by the most effective teachers of writing and linked them to the affective domains of *Writing For Pleasure*. From a rich literature review, an audit was generated which named fourteen interrelated principles, and their associated practices, which are strongly associated with high levels of student achievement and pleasure in writing. These 14 principles include:

- Build a community of writers
- Treating every child as a writer
- Read, share, think and talk about writing
- Pursue authentic and purposeful class writing projects
- Pursue personal writing projects
- Teach the writing processes
- Set writing goals

What is it *Writing For Pleasure* teachers do that makes the difference?



Final Report
Ross Young



- Teach mini-lessons
- Pupil conference
- Balance composition and transcription
- Be a writer-teacher
- Be reassuringly consistent
- Connecting reading and writing
- Interconnect the principles

Findings showed that teachers who teach the principles of *Writing For Pleasure* at a high level of proficiency have classes who feel the greatest enjoyment and satisfaction in writing and in being a writer. *Writing For Pleasure* teachers attend to self-efficacy, agency and self-regulation in a rich combination. Finally, *Writing For Pleasure* has the potential to be a highly effective pedagogy.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Young, R. Ferguson, F. (2023) *The DfE's Reading Framework: Our Review And Implications For Teaching Writing* Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [Online] Available: www.writing4pleasure.com

In 2023, the Department for Education updated its non-statutory guidance document entitled 'The reading framework: Teaching the foundations of literacy'. It purports to provide guidance for schools to meet existing expectations for teaching early reading and writing (p.78).

The mission of The Writing For Pleasure Centre is to help all young people become passionate and successful writers. As a think tank for exploring what world-class writing is and could be, a crucial part of our work is analysing emerging governmental policy. It is therefore important that we issue a response to what this document has to say.

Overall conclusion

If commercial scheme writers and schools pursue the recommendations made in this policy paper in any kind of serious way, we run the very real risk of developing the most reluctant, listless and unmotivated writers for a generation. While some of the recommendations within the policy paper are welcome, it remains grossly incomplete. We therefore urge anyone interested in developing world-class writing teaching to read the cited research within this review before making any changes to their writing teaching or commercial offerings.

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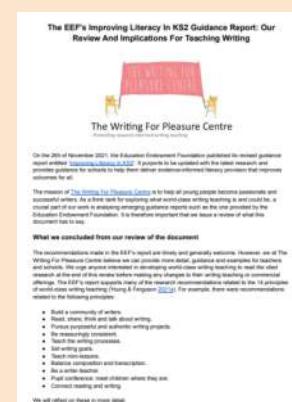
Young, R. Ferguson, F. (2021) *The Education Endowment Foundation's Improving Literacy In KS2 Guidance Report: Our Review And Implications For Teaching Writing* Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [Online] Available: www.writing4pleasure.com

On the 26th of November 2021, the Education Endowment Foundation published its revised guidance report entitled 'Improving Literacy In KS2'. It purports to be updated with the latest research and provides guidance for schools to help them deliver evidence-informed literacy provision that improves outcomes for all. The mission of The Writing For Pleasure Centre is to help all young people become passionate and successful writers. As a think tank for exploring what world-class writing teaching is and could be, a crucial part of our work is analysing emerging guidance reports such as the one provided by the Education Endowment Foundation. It is therefore important that we issue a review of what this document has to say.

What we concluded from our review of the document

The recommendations made in the EEF's report are timely and generally welcome. However, we at The Writing For Pleasure Centre believe we can provide more detail, guidance and examples for teachers and schools. We urge anyone interested in developing world-class writing teaching to read the cited research at the end of this review before making any changes to their writing teaching or commercial offerings. The EEF's report supports many of the research recommendations related to the 14 principles of world-class writing teaching. For example, there were recommendations related to the following principles:

- Build a community of writers
- Read, share, think and talk about writing
- Pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects
- Be reassuringly consistent



- Teach the writing processes
- Set writing goals
- Teach mini-lessons
- Balance composition and transcription
- Be a writer-teacher
- Pupil conference: meet children where they are
- Connect reading and writing

Free access: [LINK](#)

Research Syntheses & Meta-Analysis

Graham, S., Collins, A. A., & Ciullo, S. (2024). Evidence-based recommendations for teaching writing. *Education* 3-13, 1-14.

This article presents eleven evidence-based recommendations for teaching writing, drawing upon data from six meta-analyses and one meta-synthesis of nearly 1000 studies. The recommendations cover various aspects of writing instruction, including foundational skills, strategies, creativity, and the creation of a motivating classroom environment. The authors emphasise the importance of both writing practice and targeted instruction to improve students' writing abilities across different age groups (5-18 years). The impact of various instructional practices is evaluated using effect sizes, indicating their effectiveness for both younger and older students. Finally, the authors highlight the interconnectedness of reading and writing instruction and advocate for a holistic approach.

Here are some key recommendations for teachers:

- **Recommendation 1: Write, but writing is not enough:** Encourage frequent writing, but ensure it's connected to effective instructional practices. Integrate writing with strategies for planning, drafting, and revising.
- **Recommendation 2: Support students as they write:** Implement a process approach to writing (e.g., Writers' Workshop), which involves cycles of reading as writers, generating ideas, planning, drafting, revising, proof-reading, and sharing. Provide support through goal-setting, pre-writing activities, inquiry, peer assistance, and feedback.
- **Recommendation 3: Teach foundational writing skills:** Focus on sentence construction, grammar, handwriting, and spelling. Teach sentence combining and different sentence types. For grammar, emphasise practical application and metacognitive choices. Make handwriting and spelling instruction engaging and relevant.
- **Recommendation 4: Teach writing strategies:** Introduce, model, and invite children to apply writing strategies. Consider using the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) model, which incorporates self-regulation procedures.
- **Recommendation 5: Teach creativity, critical thinking, and imagery:** Integrate activities that encourage creativity (e.g., using similes and metaphors), critical thinking (e.g., analytical questions), and imagery (e.g., visualising objects and actions).
- **Recommendation 6: Teach summary writing:** Explicitly teach strategies for summarisation, such as identifying key ideas, eliminating redundant information, and synthesizing information.
- **Recommendation 7: Enhance students' writing knowledge:** Provide opportunities for students to read and emulate mentor texts. Teach about different text types, purposes, and structures. Facilitate observation of others' writing and feedback processes.
- **Recommendation 8: Apply twenty-first century writing tools:** Integrate digital writing tools like word processing programs and computer-assisted instruction (CAI).
- **Recommendation 9: Write across the curriculum:** Incorporate writing in content areas like reading, science, social studies, and maths.
- **Recommendation 10: Connect writing and reading instruction:** Recognise some of the interconnectedness of reading and writing. Design instruction that reinforces shared knowledge, processes, and communication aspects of both skills. Teach phonological awareness and phonics to support spelling. Teach encoding to support decoding. Invite children to write about their reading to enhance their comprehension of the text.
- **Recommendation 11: Create a motivating writing environment:** Cultivate a positive and supportive classroom culture that celebrates writing. Show your own enthusiasm for writing, make writing visible, and encourage collaboration. Build students' self-efficacy and provide individualised support.

The recommendations presented in the article are based on a substantial body of research but are not exhaustive. Teachers should stay informed about new research findings and adapt their practices accordingly. The effectiveness of any writing practice can vary depending on the specific classroom context. Teachers need to monitor and evaluate the impact of different strategies on their students. Teaching writing is not merely about improving technical skills but also about fostering a love of language, encouraging creativity, and empowering students to express themselves. As technology advances, it is crucial to integrate new tools and resources, including AI, effectively and ethically.

The article highlights the need for a paradigm shift in writing instruction, moving away from simply increasing

writing volume towards a more deliberate and strategic approach. By embracing evidence-based practices and fostering a motivating learning environment, teachers can empower students to become competent and confident writers.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: meta-analysis; meta-synthesis; writing fluency; teach the writing processes; balance composition and transcription; encoding instruction; handwriting instruction; spelling instruction; teach mini-lessons; self-regulation strategy development instruction; SRSD instruction; functional grammar teaching; sentence-level instruction; reading as writers; mentor texts; be a writer-teacher; word processing; writing across the curriculum; writing about their reading; motivation; build a community of writers

Graham, S., Kim, Y.-S., Cao, Y., Lee, W., Tate, T., Collins, P., Cho, M., Moon, Y., Chung, H. Q., & Olson, C. B. (2023). A meta-analysis of writing treatments for students in grades 6–12. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 115(7), 1004–1027. <https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000819>

There is considerable concern that many adolescents do not attain the writing competence needed to be successful in school, their personal lives, or the workplace. Ensuring that students acquire this competence is a basic responsibility of schools. In order to meet this objective, teachers need access to effective practices for teaching writing.

In this meta-analysis, we examined if teaching writing improved the writing and reading of students in Grades 6–12, and what specific writing treatments enhanced students' writing. Teaching writing had a positive and statistically detectable impact on students' writing and reading. Moreover, a variety of different writing treatments improved students' performance on writing measures. Across all writing outcomes, statistically detectable effects were obtained for:

- Comprehensive writing programs (which included the process approach to writing)
- Strategy instruction
- Digital writing tools
- Transcription instruction
- Computer-assisted instruction
- Teaching critical/creative thinking skills for writing
- Emulating good models of writing
- Feedback
- Goal setting
- Prewriting activities
- Grammar instruction
- Sentence instruction
- Inquiry
- Observing writers/readers, peer assistance
- Summarisation instruction
- Text structure instruction

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: meta-analysis; read, share, think and talk about writing; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; balance composition and transcription; teach mini-lessons; teach the writing processes; pupil conferencing; be a writer-teacher; connecting reading and writing; be reassuringly consistent; writing workshop

Hall, A. H., Gao, Q., Guo, Y., Xie, Y. (2022) Examining the effects of kindergarten writing instruction on emergent literacy skills: a systematic review of the literature, *Early Child Development and Care*, 1-13

The importance of teaching kindergarteners to be effective writers has been emphasised in recent years. The purpose of this article is to provide a systematic review of current experimental and/or quasi-experimental studies investigating writing instruction in the kindergarten setting. Framing the literature within three philosophical approaches, we identified instructional strategies related to increases in emergent literacy outcomes.

- Writing centres
- Teacher modelling
- Writing workshop
- Explicit instruction
- Authentic and purposeful writing projects
- Handwriting instruction

The results suggest that kindergarten writing instruction enhanced children's early literacy outcomes.

Tags: be reassuringly consistent; writing workshop; writing centres; writing and play; be a writer-teacher; mini-lessons; teacher modelling; self-regulation strategy development instruction; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; handwriting instruction; read, share think and talk about writing

Hall, A., Simpson, A., Guo, Y., Wang, S. (2015) Examining the Effects of Preschool Writing Instruction on Emergent Literacy Skills: A Systematic Review of the Literature, *Literacy Research and Instruction*, 54:2, 115-134

This article presents the results of a systematic review of the literature involving writing interventions in the preschool setting. The information presented is timely considering the current expectations for young children to write.

The results suggest that preschool writing interventions enhanced children's early literacy outcomes. The findings also highlighted the importance of quality literacy environments and adult involvement. The findings from this article have important instructional implications for writing instruction in the preschool setting.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be reassuringly consistent; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; emergent writers; early writers; balance composition and transcription; encoding; letter formation

Graham, S., Sandmel, K. (2011) The process writing approach: A meta-analysis, *Journal of Educational Research*, 104, pp.396–407

The process approach to writing instruction is one of the most popular methods for teaching writing.

The authors conducted meta-analysis of 29 experimental and quasi-experimental studies conducted with students aged 6–17 to examine if process writing instruction improves the quality of students' writing and motivation to write. For students in general education classes, process writing instruction resulted in a statistically significant, but relatively modest improvement in the overall quality of writing. The process writing approach neither resulted in a statistically significant improvement in students' motivation nor enhanced the quality of struggling writers' compositions.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: research synthesis; motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; read, share, think and talk about writing; teach mini-lessons; teach the writing processes; pupil conferencing; be a writer-teacher; be reassuring consistent

Graham, S., Perin, D. (2007) *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle School & High Schools* Washington, DC:Alliance for Excellent Education

This report offers a number of specific teaching techniques that research suggests will help 9-17 year old writers. The report focuses on all students, not just those who display writing difficulties, although this latter group is deservedly the focus of much attention. The premise of this report is that all students need to become proficient and flexible writers. In this report, the term "low-achieving writers" is used to refer to students whose writing skills are not adequate to meet classroom demands. Some of these low-achieving writers have been identified as having learning disabilities; others are the "silent majority" who lack writing proficiency but do not receive additional help. As will be seen in this report, some studies investigate the effects of writing instruction on groups of students across the full range of ability, from more effective to less effective writers, while others focus specifically on individuals with low writing proficiency.

Eleven 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 are identified. 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. These elements are:

- **Writing Strategies**, which involves teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and editing their compositions
- **Summarization**, which involves explicitly and systematically teaching students how to summarise texts
- **Collaborative Writing**, which uses instructional arrangements in which adolescents work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions
- **Specific Product Goals**, which assigns students specific, reachable goals for the writing they are to complete
- **Word Processing**, which uses computers and word processors as instructional supports for writing assignments

- **Sentence Combining**, which involves teaching students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences
- **Prewriting**, which engages students in activities designed to help them generate or organise ideas for their composition
- **Inquiry Activities**, which engages students in analysing immediate, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for a particular writing task
- **Process Writing Approach**, which interweaves a number of writing instructional activities in a workshop environment that stresses extended writing opportunities, writing for authentic audiences, personalised instruction, and cycles of writing
- **Study of Models**, which provides students with opportunities to read, analyse, and emulate models of good writing
- **Writing for Content Learning**, which uses writing as a tool for learning content material.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: research synthesis; build a community of writers; read, share, think and talk about writing; every child a writer; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; pursue personal writing projects; balance composition and transcription; teach mini-lessons; teach the writing processes; pupil conferencing; be a writer-teacher; connecting reading and writing

Gadd, M. (2014) *What is Critical in the Effective Teaching of Writing?* Auckland: The University of Auckland

In this paper, Gadd (2014) defines eight dimensions of effective practice and instructional strategies. They are as follows:

Learning Tasks

- Select or construct writing topics that students can identify as purposeful.
- Involve students in selecting and/or constructing their own writing topics.
- Devise open-ended learning tasks that can be undertaken over an extended time period.
- Promote the purposefulness of the writing topic at the beginning of lessons.

Lesson Learning Goals

- Involve students in the development of future lesson learning goals.
- Set a clear learning goal for the lesson that is generally related to a stage of the writing process.

Expectations

- Have a clear vision of what most students can reasonably be expected to achieve within the lesson.
- Communicate expectations clearly through displays and resources.

Direct Instruction

- Demonstrate clearly what students are expected to do. Either through 'active demonstrating' (constructing an exemplar or part of an example live) or 'receptive demonstration' (provided a pre-written exemplar). Active demonstration is said to be far more effective however.
- Build on what the students have practised already.
- Look out for and take advantage of 'teachable moments' during the lesson to provide instruction that is clearly linked to the learning goal.

Responding to Learners

- Ask high-level, meta-cognitive and text-related questions of the children whilst they write.
- Indicate 'next steps' to students when commenting (verbally or written-feedback) on their writing.
- Get children to address any verbal feedback there and then.
- Use a range of ways to respond to students' efforts.

Engagement and Challenge

- Attend to learning needs through individualised or small group instruction. Ensure students understand how their current lesson links to the future lesson(s).

Organisation and Management

- Break writing into easily identifiable stages.
- Set manageable time allocations during lessons.
- Provide sufficient opportunities for students to practise writing during lessons (on average 2.5 hours a week).
- Make contact with as many children as possible during the lesson.
- Ensure that the classroom operates to regularly repeated routines and clear behavioural expectations.

Self-regulation

- Encourage students to use resources to plan, write, revise, edit and present texts independently.
- Give time and opportunities for students to write on self-selected topics.
- Encourage students to write outside writing time (through a home/school writing notebook).

- Provide opportunities for students to look at their writing collaboratively.
- Students to set personal learning goals after each piece they complete.

Gadd (2014) suggests that effective teachers of writing employ all dimensions in strategic combination with each other. The effectiveness of each dimension is contingent on its inter-connectedness to other dimensions within the same pedagogical context. The research makes clear that instructional writing actions and activities are effective if regarded as purposeful by learners and if they include meaningful opportunities for learner involvedness. Through his research, Gadd makes it evident that what is suggested here as effective pedagogy for all learners is a particularly effective pedagogy for less experienced writers. What is good for some is in fact good for all.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: research synthesis; build a community of writers; read, share, think and talk about writing; every child a writer; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; pursue personal writing projects; balance composition and transcription; teach mini-lessons; teach the writing processes; pupil conferencing; be a writer-teacher; connecting reading and writing

Dombey, H. (2013) What do we know about teaching writing, *Preschool & Primary Education*, 1(1) pp.22-40

This paper presents an overview of research into the teaching of writing in Anglophone countries from the last 40 years or so. Unlike the teaching of reading, there appears to be little controversy over the most effective approaches: researchers in the US, UK, New Zealand and Australia appear to be in broad agreement about the most effective ways of going about this complex task.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: research synthesis; build a community of writers; read, share, think and talk about writing; every child a writer; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; pursue personal writing projects; balance composition and transcription; teach mini-lessons; teach the writing processes; pupil conferencing; be a writer-teacher; connecting reading and writing

De Smedt, F., Van Keer, H. (2014) A research synthesis on effective writing instruction in primary education, *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 112, 693–701

Effective writing skills are considered to be indispensable to participate in contemporary society. Despite its importance, there is considerable concern about writing instruction and the writing skills of primary school children. Based on this research synthesis, we recommend future studies to blend strategy instruction with a structured form of collaborative writing and to investigate its impact on cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes.

To maximise writing performances, ICT needs to be integrated with instructional practices combining strategy instruction and collaborative writing. Consequently, writing practices are properly attuned to the twenty-first century for which children are ought to be prepared.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: research synthesis; teach mini-lessons; writing study; writing instruction; self-regulated strategy instruction; ICT; read, share, think and talk about writing; build a community of writers

Graham, S., McKeown, D., Kiuhara, S., Harris, K. (2012) A meta-analysis of writing instruction for students in the elementary grades, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 104, (4), 879–896

In an effort to identify effective instructional practices for teaching writing to elementary grade students, we conducted a meta-analysis of the writing intervention literature, focusing our efforts on true and quasi-experiments. All but 1 of these interventions (grammar instruction) produced a statistically significant effect:

1. Self-regulation strategy instruction
2. Text structure instruction
3. Creativity/imagery instruction
4. Teaching transcription skills
5. Prewriting activities
6. Peer assistance when writing
7. Product goals
8. Assessing writing
9. Word processing
10. Extra writing

Moderator analyses revealed that the self-regulated strategy development model and a process approach to writing instruction improved how well students wrote.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: meta-analysis; teach mini-lessons; writing study; functional grammar teaching; sentence combining; teach the writing processes; planning; editing; proof-reading; mentor texts; genre-study; writing instruction; self-regulated strategy instruction; read, share, think and talk about writing; set product goals; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; pursue personal writing projects

Koster, M., Tribushinina, E., De Jong, P.F., Van de Bergh, B. (2015) Teaching children to write: A meta-analysis of writing intervention research, *Journal of Writing Research*, 7(2), 249–274

It has been established that in the Netherlands, as in other countries, a majority of students do not attain the desired level of writing skills at the end of elementary school. Time devoted to writing is limited, and only a minority of schools succeed in effectively teaching writing. An improvement in the way writing is taught in elementary school is clearly required. Five categories yielded statistically significant results.

- Goal setting
- Strategy instruction
- Genre study
- Peer assistance
- Pupil-conferencing and feedback

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: meta-analysis; teach mini-lessons; writing study; teach the writing processes; mentor texts; genre-study; self-regulated strategy instruction; writing instruction; read, share, think and talk about writing; set product goals; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; pupil conference: meet children where they are

McQuitty, V. (2014) Process-oriented writing instruction in elementary classrooms: Evidence of effective practices from the research literature, *Writing & Pedagogy*, 6(3), 467–495

Process writing instruction is an influential paradigm in elementary classrooms, but studies of its effectiveness are mixed. These mixed results may occur because teachers implement process writing in vastly different ways, which makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of process approaches broadly. Therefore, this literature review examines the features of process writing instruction that are effective. The studies indicate seven categories of effective practices:

- Writing strategy instruction.
- Computers in the writing process.
- Talk during the writing process.
- Play during the writing process.
- Flexible participation structures.
- Mentor texts.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: teach the writing processes; teach mini-lessons; writing study; mentor texts; genre-study; self-regulated strategy instruction; writing instruction; read, share, think and talk about writing; set product goals; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; word processing

Hillocks, G., (1986) *Research on Written Composition: New Directions for Teaching* Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills

This book provides a meta-analysis of studies on teaching approaches and focuses on composition instruction at the elementary, secondary, and college levels.

- The first chapter of the book examines general studies of the composing process, studies of process in classrooms, and studies of planning, production factors, revision, and writing apprehension.
- The second chapter explores research on the repertoire of lexical, syntactic, or rhetorical forms which writers call upon in their writing.
- The third chapter examines criticisms of experimental studies and the difficulties in doing them, then explains the techniques used in the meta-analysis of such studies, the selection of studies, and the variables examined.
- The next four chapters analyse the studies in the areas of modes of instruction, grammar and the manipulation of syntax, criteria for better writing, and invention.

- The eighth chapter presents the results of the meta-analysis for the dimensions examined: grade level, duration of treatment, mode of instruction, focus of instruction, revision, and feedback.
- The final chapter discusses the compatibility of results of treatment or method studies with those of processes studies, and offers recommendations for future research.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: meta-analysis; teach mini-lessons; writing study; functional grammar teaching; sentence combining; teach the writing processes; writing instruction; planning; mentor texts; genre-study; self-regulated strategy instruction; read, share, think and talk about writing; set product goals

Kent, S.C., Wanzek, J. (2016) The relationship between component skills and writing quality and production across developmental levels: A meta-analysis of the last 25 years, *Review of Educational Research*, 86(2), 570–601

Theories of writing development posit several component skills as necessary to the writing process. This meta-analysis synthesises the literature on the correlation between these proposed component skills and writing outcomes. Specifically, in this study, we examine the bivariate relationships between handwriting fluency, spelling, reading, and oral language and students' quality of writing and writing production. Additionally, the extent to which such relationships are moderated by student grade level and type of learner is also investigated.

The findings document that each of the component skills demonstrates a weak to moderate positive relationship to outcomes assessing writing quality and the amount students write. Moderator analyses were generally not significant with the exception that the relationship between reading and writing production was significantly higher for students in the primary grades.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: meta-analysis; component skills; transcription; spelling; handwriting; fluency; reading; oral language

Roitsch, J., Gumpert, M., Springle, A., Raymer, A. (2021) Writing Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities: Quality Appraisal of Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, 37:1, 32-44

Students with learning disabilities (LD) often struggle to initiate writing tasks and have difficulty devoting sufficient resources to complete written compositions. Educators must determine the most effective writing instruction to help these students. Evidence-based educational practices benefit from research reviews such as systematic reviews (SRs) and meta-analyses (MAs). However, not all SRs and MAs are conducted with utmost rigour. The purpose of this project was to examine existing reviews of writing instruction for students with LD, appraise their methodologic quality, and summarise findings.

Following an extensive search, we identified two SRs and four MAs that summarised evidence for writing instruction for students with LD. The reviewed studies identified strategy instruction as the most effective approach to improve writing for students with LD.

Evidence suggests explicit instruction and goal-setting approaches may benefit students with LD who demonstrate writing difficulties.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: meta-analysis; treat every child as a writer; teach mini-lessons; direct instruction; explicit instruction; writing instruction; set writing goals; self-regulation strategy instruction; functional grammar instruction; self-regulation

Australian Education Research Organisation (2022) *Writing and writing instruction: an overview of the literature*, edresearch.edu.au

Overall findings and recommendations:

- Improve Initial Teacher Education in the writing domain by specifying the content and pedagogical knowledge to be taught, ensuring adequate time is dedicated to delivering units on writing and writing instruction, and building time and quality metrics into accreditation policy and processes to ensure consistency across providers.
- Improve access to high quality and systematic professional learning options for school leaders and teachers in the writing domain.
- Increase the amount of time students spend writing (composing) and receiving writing instruction (at least one hour per day).

- Ensure writing instruction is a priority across all years of primary and secondary schooling.
- Review the instructional quality and opportunities for boys and girls, and seek to close the writing achievement gap.
- Use effective instructional techniques consistently and frequently.
- Ensure adequate foundational instruction in handwriting and spelling.
- Ensure adequate sentence-level writing instruction across the primary and secondary years.
- Embed grammar and punctuation instruction in meaningful writing tasks.
- Ensure adequate strategy instruction in planning, drafting, evaluating and revising.
- Explicitly teach genre macrostructure and microstructure through modelling, guided practice and exemplars, providing subject specific instruction as required.
- Ensure adequate attention to informational and persuasive writing, alongside narrative writing.
- Ensure students write frequently for a range of meaningful audiences and purposes.
- Build knowledge for writing such as rich content knowledge, knowledge of linguistic and rhetorical features, and vocabulary.
- Integrate instruction across the curriculum by using writing to support reading and learning.
- Consider using validated writing programs, noting that one approach or program alone does not cover all aspects of writing instruction or constitute a curriculum.
- Embed frequent formative assessment and provide explicit feedback to move students forward
- Align writing goals, curriculum, instructional methods and assessment practices.
- Teach typing skills and provide students with opportunities to compose using digital writing tools.
- Create motivating and supporting writing environments where writing is valued, routine and collaborative.
- Provide additional scaffolding and instruction for students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: research synthesis; initial teacher education; initial teacher training; professional development; be reassuring consistent; teach mini-lessons; direct instruction; explicit instruction; handwriting; typing; spelling; sentence-level instruction; functional grammar instruction; self-regulation strategy instruction; teach the writing processes; genre-study; mentor texts; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; connect reading and writing; responsive teaching; assessment for learning; pupil-conference; verbal feedback; set writing goals; build a community of writers; treat every child as a writer; special educational needs and disabilities

Guidance From Reputable Organisations

Toria, G. (2014) *Evidence-Based Practices For Writing Instruction* In CEEDAR. Lansing, MI: Michigan State University

This paper features guidance for teachers to help them develop evidence-based practices for writing instruction. This includes teachers focusing on:

- Build a community of writers
 - Writing being an essential part of the curriculum
 - Varying their approaches to the teaching of writing
 - Writing to learn in the wider curriculum
 - Promoting a supportive writing environment
- Teach the writing processes
 - Teaching idea generation, planning, drafting, revision and proof-reading techniques.
- Set writing goals
 - Genre study and textual features instruction
 - Use of mentor texts
 - Setting product goals
 - Using checklists and rubrics
- Effective assessment and feedback
- Using technology as part of your writing instruction
- Teach mini-lessons
 - Instruction focused on writing skills
 - Comprehensive writing instruction
 - Self-regulation strategy instruction
 - Paragraph structure instruction
 - Vocabulary instruction
 - Figurative language instruction
 - Transcription skills instruction
 - Grammar and usage instruction

- Sentence-combining instruction
- Summarisation instruction
- Balance composition and transcription
 - Decreasing spelling and grammar/usage errors
- Attending to children's emotional and affective needs
 - Promoting self-regulation and reflective writers
- Be reassuringly consistent
 - Providing extra time for writing
 - A process writing approach (a contemporary writer's workshop approach)
- Pursue personal writing projects
 - 'Free writing'
- Be a writer-teacher
 - Teacher modelling
- Pupil-conferencing
- Pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects
 - Attend to children's motivation
- Treat every child as a writer
- Read, share, think and talk about writing
 - Peer collaboration
- Connect reading and writing
 - Writing in response to their reading
 - Writing in the wider-curriculum

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: build a community of writers; treat every child as a writer; read, share, think and talk about writing; pursue authentic and purposeful class writing projects; pursue personal writing projects; teach the writing processes; set writing goals; teach mini-lessons; pupil conference; balance composition and transcription; be a writer-teacher; be reassuringly consistent; connecting reading and writing; writing instruction; genre-study; rubrics; technology; word processors; writing in the wider curriculum; writing in the content areas; motivation; self-regulation; self-regulation strategy instruction; functional grammar instruction; sentence-level instruction

Gerde, H.K., Bingham, G.E., Wasik, B.A. (2012) Writing in Early Childhood Classrooms: Guidance for Best Practices, *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 40, pp.351–359

Writing is a critical emergent literacy skill that lays the foundation for children's later literacy skills and reading achievement. Recent work indicates that many early childhood programs offer children materials and tools for engaging in writing activities but teachers rarely are seen modelling writing for children or scaffolding children's writing attempts.

Early childhood educational settings hoping to support children's literacy development should provide multiple opportunities for children to observe teachers model writing, provide teacher support and scaffolding for children's writing attempts and engage children in meaningful writing in their play. This paper provides twelve research-based guidelines for supporting children's writing development in early childhood classrooms.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be reassuringly consistent; writing workshop; be a writer teacher; play; writing instruction; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects

Graham, S. and Harris, K. R. (2016) 'A path to better writing: Evidence-based practices in the classroom'. *The Reading Teacher*, 69(4), pp. 359–365.

Embarking on the journey of writing is akin to facing a poorly defined problem, where the overarching purpose is clear, but the solutions are boundless and the criteria for success remain elusive. This article delves into the intricate landscape of writing, a process characterised by inherent challenges and complexities.

The article underscores the multifaceted nature of the writing process, encompassing motor, cognitive, and affective skills. Decisions regarding expression, organisation, and language use demand a delicate orchestration of these skills. The writer must continually evaluate, revise, and refine her message, striving for clarity and persuasiveness. Additionally, the inherent difficulty arises from the writer's limited knowledge of the inclinations and preferences of each family member, posing a constant challenge in determining what needs to be said and how.

By unpacking the intricate layers of writing, this article sheds light on the dynamic interplay of skills and decision-making processes involved in transforming a vaguely defined problem into a compelling and persuasive piece of communication.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be reassuringly consistent; teach mini-lessons; writing instruction; motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; teach the writing processes; functional grammar instruction; writing instruction; writing workshop; process approach; genre study; mentor texts; read, share, think and talk about writing; set writing goals

Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., Olinghouse, N. (2012) *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers: A practice guide* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education

The recommendations in this guide cover teaching the writing process, teaching fundamental writing skills, encouraging students to develop essential writing knowledge, and developing a supportive writing environment. All of these practices are aimed at achieving a single goal: enabling students to use writing flexibly and effectively to help them learn and communicate their ideas.

- Recommendation 1: Provide daily time for students to write
- Recommendation 2: Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes
- Recommendation 3: Teach students to become fluent with handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing and word processing
- Recommendation 4: Create an engaged community of writers

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Tags: be reassuringly consistent; teach mini-lessons; writing instruction; motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; teach the writing processes; functional grammar instruction; writing instruction; writing workshop; process approach; genre study; mentor texts; read, share, think and talk about writing; set writing goals

Case Studies

Pressley, M., Yokoi, L., Rankin, J., Wharton-McDonald, R., Mistretta, J. (1997) A survey of the instructional practices of grade 5 teachers nominated as effective in promoting literacy, *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 1(2), 145–160

Teachers of 10 year olds, who were nominated by their supervisors as effective in educating their students to be readers and writers, responded to questionnaires about their practice. The teachers claimed commitments to:

- Extensive reading at the heart of their reading instruction
- Diverse instructional activities (e.g., whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, cooperative grouping, individual reading)
- Teaching of both word-level and higher order (e.g., comprehension, critical thinking) skills and processes
- Development of student background knowledge
- Student writing, including teaching of mechanics and higher order composition skills (e.g., planning, drafting, revising as a process)
- Extensive evaluation of literacy competencies using diverse assessments
- Integration of literacy and content-area instruction
- Commitment to practices that promote student motivation for reading and writing.

Excellent literacy instruction is a balanced articulation of many components, including whole language experiences and skills instruction.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: case studies; exceptional teachers of writing; be reassuringly consistent; connect reading and writing; read, share, think and talk about writing; group instruction; writing instruction; pupil conferencing; feedback; responsive teaching; teach mini-lessons; balance composition and transcription; funds of knowledge; funds of identity; teach the writing processes; planning; drafting; revising; formative assessment; writing in the wider curriculum; writing in the content areas

Pressley, M., Wharton-McDonald, R., Allington, R., Block, C., Morrow, L., Tracey, D., Baker, K., Brooks, G., Cronin, J., Nelson, E., Woo, D. (2001) A study of effective first-grade literacy instruction, *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 5(1), 35–58

Literacy instruction in first-grade classrooms in five U.S. schools were observed. Based on academic engagement and classroom literacy performances, highly-effective and ineffective teachers were selected. The teaching of the most effective teachers was then analysed, including in relation to the teaching of the least-effective teachers. The classrooms headed by most-effective teachers were characterised by:

- Excellent classroom management based on positive reinforcement and cooperation
- Balanced teaching of skills, literature, and writing
- Scaffolding and matching of task demands to student competence
- Encouragement of student self-regulation
- Strong cross-curricular connections.

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Tags: case studies; exceptional teachers of writing; be reassuringly consistent; read, share, think and talk about writing; balance composition and transcription; connecting reading and writing; scaffolding; responsive teaching; writing instruction; self-regulation strategy instruction; self-regulation; writing in the wider curriculum; writing in the content areas

Pressley, M., Gaskins, I., Soric, K., Collins, S. (2006) A portrait of benchmark school: How a school produces high achievement in students who previously failed, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(2), 282–306

This is a case study of a Benchmark School, which educates 6-15-year-olds with a history of school failure. Grounded theory methodology was employed to generate a theory about how the school promotes achievement. Many elements potentially promoting academic achievement were identified, including ones informed by psychological theory and research (e.g., evidence-based literacy instructional practices, strategies instruction, conceptually focused content instruction, many mechanisms to motivate students) but also, selective admissions, human resources (i.e., well-trained teachers, supportive parents, skilled counsellors), small class size, and a supportive physical context. The theory that emerges is that many elements must be articulated to remediate struggling elementary students, although some are more important than others.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: case studies; exceptional teachers of writing; formative assessment; responsive teaching; self-regulation strategy instruction; writing instruction; build a community of writers; situational motivation; writer-identity; self-regulation; motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; reassuringly consistent routine; teach the writing processes; balance composition and transcription; pupil conferencing; feedback

Parr, J.M., Limbrick, L. (2010) Contextualising practice: Hallmarks of effective teachers of writing, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 583–590

This study identifies practices of effective teachers of writing. Three schools with significantly higher achievement in an area that underperforms nationally were identified and within them teachers whose students exhibited superior progress were selected. Common was:

- A commitment to formative assessment practices.
- Classroom environments supportive of student literacy learning.

Hallmarks of exceptional teachers included:

- Students having a greater awareness of their learning
- A focus on a sense of purpose and meaningfulness in their writing projects.
- A coherence or connectedness to class writing projects
- A consistent and systematic routine to their writing lessons and projects.

This paper argues that student achievement in writing is likely to be higher when teachers exhibit strengths in these hallmarks.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: case studies; exceptional teachers of writing; formative assessment; responsive teaching; self-regulation strategy instruction; writing instruction; build a community of writers; situational motivation; writer-identity; self-regulation; motivation; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; reassuringly consistent routine; teach the writing processes; balance composition and transcription; pupil conferencing; feedback

Although there has been an interest in 'effective schools' and 'effective teaching' for decades now, it is only recently that there has been a specific focus on literacy and especially on those characteristics and practices of teachers who appear to be successful in their teaching of literacy. We know a great deal about how children acquire literacy and develop as readers and writers, but we are only just beginning to understand more fully the ways and means through which successful teachers promote healthy literacy growth amongst their students. Many curriculum approaches and packages have been found both to work and to fail; what seems critical is the skills of the teacher. We need to know more about how to recognise 'effective' teachers of literacy and to understand more fully the kinds of professional knowledge, beliefs and classroom actions that are associated with the successful teaching of literacy

The synthesis of the 12 studies in the in-depth review showed that effective teachers of literacy have a wide and varied repertoire of teaching practices and approaches (e.g. scaffolding, where support in learning is initially provided by the teacher and then gradually withdrawn as the pupil gains in confidence) integrating reading with writing, differentiated instruction, excellent classroom management skills) and they can intelligently and skilfully blend them together in different combinations according to the needs of individual pupils.

Effective literacy teachers are especially alert to children's progress and can step in and utilise the appropriate method or practice to meet the child's instructional needs. The 'effective' teacher of literacy uses an unashamedly eclectic collection of methods which represents a balance between the direct teaching of skills and more holistic approaches. This means that they balance direct skills teaching with more authentic, contextually-grounded literacy activities. They avoid the partisan adherence to any one sure-fire approach or method. The synthesis of the three studies (in which teacher effectiveness was empirically demonstrated) that underwent the second and more rigorous stage of in-depth reviewing suggests the actions that teachers can take to promote literacy development in the early years of school. These are as follows:

- **Balance** (direct skills instruction and more contextually-grounded literacy activities)
- **Integration** (integrating literacy modes, and linking with other curricular areas)
- **Pupil Engagement** (on-task behaviour and pupil self-regulation)
- **Teaching Style** (involving differentiated instruction - incorporating extensive use of scaffolding and coaching and careful and frequent monitoring of pupil progress)
- **Links With Parents And Local Community**

There simply is no one single critical variable that defines outstanding literacy instruction. According to the research evidence, however, there is a cluster of beliefs and practices like scaffolding, the encouragement of self-regulation, high teacher expectations, and expert classroom management.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: research synthesis; build a community of writers; read, share, think and talk about writing; every child a writer; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; pursue personal writing projects; balance composition and transcription; teach mini-lessons; teach the writing processes; pupil conferencing; be a writer-teacher; connecting reading and writing

Medwell, J., Wray, D., Poulson, L., Fox, R. (1998) *Effective Teachers of Literacy* A Report Commissioned by the UK Teacher Training Agency

A study was commissioned to help the *Teacher Training Agency* and teachers in England to understand more clearly how effective teachers help children to become literate. Research aims were to:

- Identify the key factors of what effective teachers know, understand, and do that enables them to put effective literacy teaching into practice
- Identify the strategies that would enable those factors to be more widely applied
- Examine aspects of continuing professional development that contribute to the development of effective teachers of literacy
- Examine what aspects of their initial teacher training and induction contribute to developing expertise in novice teachers of literacy.

Findings suggest that effective teachers of literacy:

- Believe it is important to make it explicit that the purpose of teaching literacy is enabling their pupils to create meaning using text
- Centred their teaching around "shared texts"
- Teach aspects of reading/writing such as decoding and spelling in a systematic, structured way
- Emphasise to their pupils the functions of what they were learning in literacy
- Have developed strong and coherent personal philosophies about the teaching of literacy

- Have well-developed systems for monitoring children's progress and needs in literacy
- Have had considerable experience of in-service activities in literacy.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be a writer teacher; teacher orientations; teacher philosophy; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; connect reading and writing; teach the writing processes; subject knowledge; grammar; phonics; encoding; pupil conferencing; responsive teaching; assessment for learning; genre study; balance composition and transcription; set writing goals; spelling; writing instruction; teach mini-lessons; self-regulation strategy instruction; be reassuringly consistent

Block, C.C., Oakar, M., Hurt, N. (2002) The expertise of literacy teachers: A continuum from preschool to Grade 5, *Reading Research Quarterly*, 37: 178-206

Research has demonstrated that teaching expertise makes a significant difference in the rate and depth of students' literacy growth, and that highly effective educators share similar characteristics.

The purpose of this study was to identify the qualities of teaching expertise that distinguished highly effective instruction at different grade levels.

Preschool to Grade 5 literacy teachers were distinguished from one another by 44 aspects of teaching expertise. These include:

- Attending to children's emotional writing needs including their feelings of: self-efficacy, self-regulation, agency, motivation, volition and writer-identity
- Being a writer-teacher
- Reading, sharing, thinking and talking about writing
- Balancing composition and transcription
- Using children's existing funds of knowledge and identity
- Pursuing purposeful and authentic class writing projects
- Engaging in responsive teaching
- Treating every child as a writer
- Being reassuringly consistent
- Encouraging the use of invented spellings and teaching encoding strategies
- Connect reading and writing
- Undertake pupil conferencing
- Teaching mini-lessons
- Teach the writing processes
- Pursuing personal writing projects
- Writing in the writing centre and other play areas
- Building a community of writers
- Engaging in genre study
- Setting writing goals

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Tags: pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; teach the writing processes; emergent writing; early writers; encoding; invented spellings; connect reading and writing; self-regulation; writing instruction; self-regulation strategy instruction; scaffolding; treat every child as a writer; build a community of writers; motivation; be a writer-teacher; read, share, think and talk about writing; pursue personal writing projects; responsive teaching; be reassuring consistent; pupil conferencing; mini-lessons; writing centres; play; genre-study; set writing goals

Wharton-McDonald, R., Pressley, M., Hampston, J. (1998) Outstanding literacy instruction in first grade: Teacher practices and student achievement *Elementary School Journal*, 99, 101-128

Classroom observations and in-depth interviews were used to study nine first-grade teachers who were nominated by literacy coordinators as being either outstanding or typical in their ability to help students develop the skills of beginning literacy. Based on observational measures of year-end student reading and writing achievement and on ongoing measures of student engagement, three groups of teachers emerged from the original set of nine. Among the three teachers in the highest achievement group, the following cluster of beliefs and practices were found to distinguish their instruction from that of their more typical peers:

- Instructional balance of skills and high-quality reading and writing experiences
- A high density of instruction
- Extensive use of scaffolding
- Encouragement of student self-regulation
- A thorough integration of reading and writing activities

- High expectations for all students
- Masterful classroom management
- An awareness of purpose.

Results complemented earlier survey data that highlighted the complexity of primary literacy instruction. These data and the previous survey results provide convergent support for the conclusion that truly outstanding primary-level literacy instruction is a balanced integration of high-quality reading and writing experiences and explicit instruction of basic literacy skills.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; teach the writing processes; emergent writing; early writers; encoding; connect reading and writing; self-regulation; writing instruction; self-regulation strategy instruction; scaffolding; treat every child as a writer; build a community of writers

Rowe, D., Shimizu, A., Davis, Z. (2021) Essential Practices for Engaging Young Children as Writers: Lessons from Expert Early Writing Teachers, *The Reading Teacher*, pp.1-10

Given the importance of early writing experiences, a key question is how educators can increase the amount and quality of writing in early childhood settings.

Expert early writing teachers were observed to identify the types of activities and interactions they used to engage 4-5-year-olds as writers.

- Writing instruction occurred as part of meaningful activities related to class units of study and the children's play.
- Teachers wrote in front of and alongside children to provide live demonstrations of what, how, and why to write.
- They encouraged young children to participate as writers by inviting children to write, talking with them about their messages and texts, supporting idea development and print processes as needed, inviting children to read their print, and creating opportunities for children to share their writing with others.
- Teachers accepted and valued children's writing attempts, regardless of the types of marks produced.

(£): [LINK](#)

Tags: pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; teach the writing processes; emergent writing; early writers; be a writer teacher; encoding; pursue personal writing projects; read, share, think and talk about writing; treat every child as a writer

Louden, W., Rohl, M., Barrat-Pugh, C., Brown, C., Cairney, T., Elderfield, J., House, H., Meiers, M., Rivaland, J., Rowe, K. J. (2005) In teachers' hands: Effective literacy teaching practices in the early years of schooling, *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 28, 173-252

The aim of this study was to identify teaching practices that lead to improved literacy outcomes for children in the early years of schooling.

- The type of literacy teaching activity used by the teachers varied only slightly according to teacher effectiveness. The same few activities were widely used by all teachers regardless of their effectiveness. Generally, the more effective, effective and less effective teachers all extensively used familiar early years literacy activities such as shared book reading, modelled writing and phonics teaching. However, there were distinct qualitative differences in the ways in which these activities were carried out by teachers of varying degrees of effectiveness. Some literacy teaching activities that we had expected to find, such as the use of phonics-based commercial literacy programs and computer based literacy activities, were not widely used by the teachers in our observation sample.
- Literacy teaching practices varied according to teacher effectiveness. The more effective teachers demonstrated a wide variety of literacy teaching practices. The less effective teachers demonstrated a limited number of literacy teaching practices.
- The literacy teaching repertoires of the more effective teachers included teaching practices that were most frequently observed such as attention or engagement, those that were frequently observed such as pace and metalanguage, and those such as challenges that were rarely observed in classrooms. On the other hand, the literacy teaching repertoires of the less effective teachers tended to be dominated by those teaching practices that were frequently observed in classrooms.
- There was no quantitative difference between teacher groups for the teaching practice we called 'explicitness-word', that is, directing children's attention to explicit word and sound strategies. The more effective, effective, and less effective teachers all paid some explicit attention to phonics. There were, however, distinct qualitative differences between the ways in which these groups of teachers taught phonics. Whilst the more effective and effective teachers generally used a highly structured approach to phonics teaching, they were usually observed teaching word level skills and knowledge

within a wider context, such as a theme or topic being studied, a shared book, a writing lesson or a spelling lesson, so that the purpose of learning phonics was made clear and relevant. Further, these teachers provided extremely clear explanations of word level structures, and explanations that were of a higher order than those of the less effective teachers. They also provided careful scaffolding, including guided practice in a variety of contexts, to ensure that important phonic concepts were learnt. These teachers also kept a focus on broader text level features, with a particular focus on comprehension of texts.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: be reassuringly consistent; balance composition and transcription; self-regulation; agency; motivation; build a community of writers; read, share, think and talk about writing; play; pursue purposeful and authentic class writing projects; phonics; encoding; spelling; teach mini-lessons; writing instruction; be a writer teacher; pupil-conferencing

Langer, J.A. (2001) Beating the odds: Teaching middle and high school students to read and write well, *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4), 837–880

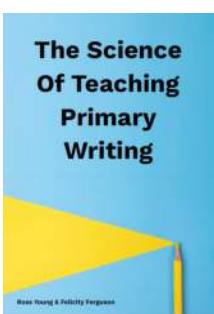
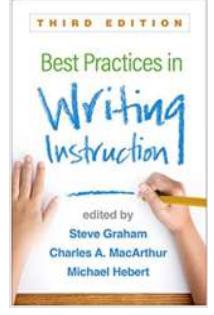
This study investigated the characteristics of instruction that accompany student achievement in reading, writing, and English. Analyses specified six features that permeated the environments and provided marked distinctions between higher and more typically performing schools. In higher performing schools:

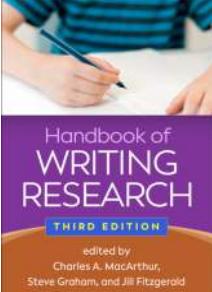
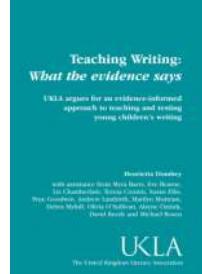
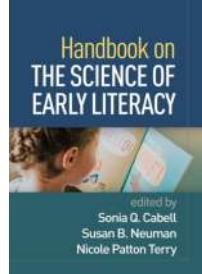
- Instruction in the knowledge and conventions of English and high literacy take place as separated and simulated as well as integrated experiences.
- Test preparation is interpreted as encompassing the underlying skills and knowledge needed to do well in coursework as well as on tests and integrated into the ongoing class time, as part of the ongoing English language arts curriculum.
- Overt connections are constantly made among knowledge, skills, and ideas across lessons, classes, and grades as well as across in-school and out-of-school applications.
- Students are overtly taught strategies for thinking about ideas as well as completing activities.
- Even after achievement goals are met, teachers move beyond those immediate goals toward students' deeper understandings and generativity of ideas.
- The content and skills of English are taught as social activity, with depth and complexity of understanding and proficiency with conventions growing from collaborative discourse.

Free access: [LINK](#)

Tags: case study; teach mini-lessons; writing study; functional grammar teaching; sentence combining; teach the writing processes; self-regulated strategy instruction; writing instruction; read, share, think and talk about writing; set product goals; pursue purposeful and authentic writing projects; build a community of writers

Recommended chapters and literature

	Young, R., Ferguson, F. (2022) <i>The Science Of Teaching Primary Writing</i> Brighton: The Writing For Pleasure Centre [LINK]
	Graham, S., MacArthur, C., Hebert, M. (2019) <i>Best Practices in Writing Instruction</i> New York: The Guilford Press

 <p>Handbook of WRITING RESEARCH THIRD EDITION edited by Charles A. MacArthur, Steve Graham, and Jill Fitzgerald</p>	<p>MacArthur, C., Graham, S., Fitzgerald, J. (2025) <i>Handbook Of Writing Research</i> New York, NY: Guilford</p>
 <p>Teaching Writing: What the evidence says UKLA argues for an evidence-informed approach to teaching and testing young children's writing</p> <p>Handwritten with contributions from: Miles Richardson, Ian Macbeth, Nicola Crispin, Sophie Elliot, Pete Gould, Helen Hart, Heather McPherson, Suzanne McPhail, Olivia O'Byrne, Helen Park, David Reith and Michael Rosen</p> <p>UKLA The Voice of English Language Education</p>	<p>Dombey, H. (2013) <i>Teaching Writing: What The Evidence Says</i> Leicester: UKLA</p>
 <p>Handbook on THE SCIENCE OF EARLY LITERACY edited by Sonia Q. Cabell, Susan B. Neuman Nicole Patton Terry</p>	<p>Dickinson, D. K. (2023). <i>Handbook on the Science of Early Literacy</i>. Guilford Publications.</p>

This handbook addresses all the major aspects of teaching writing. We would like to support teachers in developing sound subject knowledge and exceptional classroom practice. The handbook includes:

- Over 1000 research entries covering the major aspects of developing students as writers.
- Short abstracts and keyword tags to help teachers find the research they are looking for.
- An analysis of the analysis and what it is the best performing writing teachers do that makes the difference.
- A chapter dedicated to each of the 14 principles of world-class writing teaching.
- Research on the early teaching of writing including compositional development, phonics, encoding, spelling, letter formation and handwriting.
- Extended entries on major topics such as speaking and listening, reading/writing connection, multilingualism, special educational needs and disabilities, and social and emotional disorders.
- Focused chapters on the affective needs of student writers, including: self-efficacy (confidence), self-regulation (competence and independence), agency, motivation and writer-identity.
- Essential literature and suggested reading offered at the end of each chapter.

This text is a useful resource for anyone interested in developing world-class writing teaching. Teachers should find what is shared within these pages utterly interesting, informed and helpful.

