

ELA Recommendations and Strategies

Aligned with South Carolina Standards

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Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively

Grades K–6th

Recommendation 3

Use assessments of student writing to inform instruction and feedback.

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The formative assessment cycle is a process where teachers regularly assess student skill levels, adapt instruction based on the assessment data, and then reassess skill levels. When teachers monitor student progress throughout the entire writing process, it provides helpful information for lesson planning and provides additional feedback to students. Assessment should occur on a regular basis, not just through final written products. This helps teachers better understand student progress so they can provide students with targeted instruction.

Strategy 1

Assess students’ strengths and areas for improvement before teaching a new strategy or skill.

South Carolina standards alignment

LITERACY: I.3, I.5

TEACHER: INST.PIC.2, INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3, PLAN.A.1, PLAN.A.2, PLAN.A.3, PLAN.A.4, PLAN.A.5

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Utilize frequent assessments to identify student strengths and challenges.
- Use carefully defined on-demand writing prompts to assess student skills.
- Organize student data to identify groups with similar needs.

Utilize frequent assessment to identify strengths and challenges for individual students and groups of students. Assessment can occur through class work, complex essay writing, or on-demand writing prompts. On-demand writing prompts are short writing assignments that are carefully designed to assess student skills. Effective on- demand writing prompts identify a purpose and audience, offer some form of student choice, are age-appropriate, and should reflect authentic topics. For on-demand writing samples and design guidelines, reference page 46 in the practice guide. Teacher teams can collaborate to design common prompts and analyze common data. The use of a graphic organizer helps identify common student strengths and areas of need across student groups. A sample organizer is located on page 47 of the practice guide.

Subject

Math

ELA

Cross
Content

Level of Evidence

Minimal

Moderate

Strong

Grades

Pre-K

K

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th

8th

9th

10th

11th

12th

Strategy 2

Analyze student writing to tailor instruction and target feedback.

South Carolina standards alignment

LITERACY: I.3, I.5

TEACHER: INST.PIC.2, INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3, PLAN.A.1, PLAN.A.2, PLAN.A.3, PLAN.A.4, PLAN.A.5

Instructional strategies from the examples:

- Use formative assessment data to create lessons that challenge students. Use the data to provide constructive feedback that supports student growth.
- Modify lessons and assignments for different instructional groupings.

Choose learning objectives and create lessons that challenge students based on formative assessment data. Customize lessons and assignments for different instructional groupings, including individual students, small groups, classes, and grade levels. Support student growth through specific feedback targeted to the student's identified needs. Provide constructive feedback using protocols such as "Glow and Grow" and "Praise-Question-Polish." Student teams can aggregate and review school and grade-level data for trends in overall strengths and areas of need.

Locate and Recall

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

Strategy 3

Regularly monitor students' progress while teaching writing strategies and skills.

South Carolina standards alignment

LITERACY: I.5

TEACHER: INST.TKS.1, INST.TKS.3

Instructional strategy from the examples:

- Monitor students' progress frequently and regularly based on students' progress and learning goals. Utilize tracking tools or visual representations to inform student groupings and instruction and to monitor student growth and areas for improvement.

Monitor student progress at regular intervals. The frequency of monitoring students depends on their progress and learning goals. Through the use of tracking tools or visual representations, student growth and areas in need of improvement can be monitored and used to inform student groupings and instruction. Refer to page 54 of the practice guide for a sample data-tracking sheet.

Potential Roadblock 1

Writing is a nuanced discipline and each of my students needs support with a unique collection of skills. I do not have the resources to provide that level of differentiation.

Suggested Approach. Finding time to personalize instruction for students is difficult but beneficial because it is targeted support and students feel cared for when someone takes the time to customize instruction for them. Teachers should allot a small amount of class time, 5 to 10 minutes weekly, to work with students who need help in similar areas. Small-group instruction can occur while other students are completing independent work assignments. Collaborate with colleagues from other content areas about strategies for efficiently supporting student writing in the classroom.

Potential Roadblock 2

I don't have time to regularly conduct formative assessments for all of my students.

Suggested Approach. Use existing assignments and assessments as a formative assessment. Provide students with opportunities to participate in formative assessments through peer and self-assessments.

Potential Roadblock 3

I am not allowed to modify my school's curriculum or standards. How can I still use formative assessment?

Suggested Approach. Data-informed instruction can occur with existing curriculum and standards; the goal is to identify what areas of the curriculum students have not mastered and to support them in those areas.

References

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