



Simplify  
Writing®



# *Program Evidence*

ESSA TIER 4 BRIEF



## Program Overview

*The Simplify Writing® program offers a comprehensive solution for teaching writing*, including daily writing lessons, differentiated grammar lessons, intervention materials, and resources for English Language Learners. It also provides an on-demand training course for teachers to support them in implementing the program effectively.

Simplify Writing® is research-based and emphasizes four key methods: bite-sized instruction, fluid grammar, differentiation, and support, making it a valuable resource for today's diverse classrooms.



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Writing®

## Methods

### BITE-SIZED INSTRUCTION



Students learn best when the writing standards are **broken down into short, clear lessons** that they can then apply in their own writing. Each of our lessons takes about 10-15 minutes and keeps students engaged and active in the learning experience.

### FLUID GRAMMAR



Grammar instruction should **naturally flow** into student writing. We incorporate grammar instruction in the context of our writing units along with providing standalone grammar lessons for differentiation.

### DIFFERENTIATION



We know firsthand that each classroom is made up of a diverse group of students. Our resources provide the flexibility teachers need to **reach students with varying experiences**, background knowledge, and ability levels.

### SUPPORT



Teachers are more successful when they receive **adequate training on a new curriculum**. We walk teachers through using the Simplify Writing® materials in every step of their writing instruction, and we provide ongoing email support to address any questions or issues they have in their writing block.



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## Logic Model

This logic model demonstrates that utilizing the lessons and activities offered in Simplify Writing® in an effective manner can result in favorable outcomes for administrators, teachers, and students.

### RESOURCES (INPUT)

#### Teacher Access

- Teacher dashboard
- Self-paced training library
- 1-on-1 instructional coaching

#### Core Program

- Fully editable daily lesson plans
- Teacher models
- Mentor Text
- Coordinating student pages with graphic organizers
- Digital file option for e-learning

#### Differentiation

- Intervention tools library
- Tools for ELLs
- Grammar lesson library

#### Assessment

- Pre-assessment structure supports teachers with data gathering and planning
- Student-friendly rubrics
- Spreadsheet to track data and plan differentiation
- Test prep resources

### ACTIVITIES

#### Whole Group Instruction

- Teachers consistently model writing skills using direct instruction and active engagement strategies included in our core program
- Students analyze and deconstruct the writing process for different genres
- Grammar skills are introduced or retaught

#### Independent Writing Time

- Writing and grammar skills are applied in-context
- Peer review and feedback sessions are conducted to improve writing and collaboration skills
- Teachers group students for small group instruction based on learning gaps recorded in their assessment spreadsheet
- Teachers confer with students, focusing on individualized goals

### OUTPUTS

- Teachers pre-assess students and begin tracking data
- Teachers review daily lessons and make modifications for student needs
- Teachers save time planning writing lessons
- Students engage in application of new writing skills
- Students increase writing stamina
- Students fluidly work through the writing process from brainstorming to publishing
- Students learn and apply grammatical skills
- Students work collaboratively to give and receive feedback
- Students edit and revise their writing
- Students use technology to enhance their writing skills

### OUTCOMES

- Teachers will gain confidence in teaching writing
- Teachers will observe improved engagement and motivation during writing activities
- Administrators and parents will observe student progress and higher scores on assessments
- Students will display enhanced communication and collaboration skills
- Students will increase their use of writing outside of the classroom
- Students will show an improvement in grammar and syntax skills
- Students will apply writing skills in other subject areas
- Students will display enhanced digital literacy and proficiency in using technology for writing and research purposes



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## Research Brief

### DEDICATED WRITING TIME

Writing skills are sorely lacking in many schools because there is no explicit writing instruction (Graham 2019). **The Simplify Writing® curriculum provides engaging lessons and differentiation materials to use during a dedicated writing time. This writing block is split into two parts: direct instruction time (learning) and independent writing time (application).** Studies support having a dedicated writing time where students can receive adequate practice and instruction in writing.

Across multiple studies, such as those conducted by Cutler and Graham (2008), Dockrell, Marshall, and Wyse (2016), and Hsiang and Graham (2016), it was found that teachers who dedicated a significant amount of time to writing instruction consistently provided their students with a strong writing foundation. The teachers in these studies employed various instructional practices, including evidence-based practices, to promote their students' writing success and growth. Evidence-based practices used in the elementary grades included teaching writing for different purposes, strategies for writing processes such as planning and revising, conducting formative assessments to guide instruction, and teaching foundational writing skills such as handwriting, spelling, and sentence construction.

Establishing a dedicated writing block is beneficial in creating a consistent routine that leads to improved overall writing output. Routines help to create smooth transitions between activities and therefore allow fewer opportunities for disruptions to occur (Burden, 2003). To establish an effective routine, it is important that it is consistent, explicit, and that students are taught in a direct and systematic manner. By allocating a specific time each day for writing, writers can establish a routine that promotes productivity and efficiency in their writing.

This dedicated time also provides an opportunity to give individualized feedback, which is crucial for student growth and development as a writer (Brookhart, 2017). This time can also be used to provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students and help them to achieve their full potential as writers.



## Research Brief

### STRATEGY-FOCUSED DIRECT INSTRUCTION

Strategy-focused instruction is one of the most effective approaches to improve writing skills. **The Simplify Writing® program includes direct instruction, modeling, and scaffolded practice. It aims to teach developing writers strategies that give them executive control over their writing processes.** Study findings suggest that both components, direct teaching and modeling, are equally effective in improving writing skills.

One study conducted by Lopez (2017) examines the effects of direct instruction and strategy modeling on the writing development of upper-primary students. The results of the study suggest that direct instruction can improve the writing skills of upper-primary students. The study also found that the use of strategy modeling, in combination with direct instruction, was more effective in improving the writing skills of upper-primary students than direct instruction alone. The findings of the study suggest that direct instruction and strategy modeling can be effective approaches to teaching writing skills to upper-primary students.

In *The New Art and Science of Teaching*, Marzano (2017) provides an overview of the key elements of direct instruction and offers practical guidance on how to effectively plan and deliver direct instruction lessons. He emphasizes the importance of clear explanations, examples and non-examples, guided and independent practice, and the use of technology to enhance instruction. He notes that during a direct instruction lesson, it is important for teachers to provide clear explanations, use examples and non-examples, check for understanding, and provide feedback. **These elements are included in the step-by-step teacher directions, models, and scripts inside the Simplify Writing® core curriculum.**



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## Research Brief

### TEACHER CLARITY

Teacher clarity is a critical component of effective teaching and learning, defined as the ability to create clear and understandable instructional materials that help students achieve desired learning outcomes (Freibrun, 2021). **The Simplify Writing® core lessons support both teachers and students by providing clear purpose, success criteria, and learning goals for every lesson.** Research shows that there must be appropriately challenging goals in order to maximize feedback (Hattie, 2010). Hattie also argues that by focusing on evidence-based practices and using data to inform decision-making, educators can create more effective teaching and learning environments that lead to better student outcomes. The way that the Simplify Writing® program sequences its lessons provides a logical pathway from where the students are at to where we want them to be.

Visible learning, or seeing learning through the eyes of the students, also reveals that the impact of education is not solely determined by the quality of teaching or the resources available to schools, but also by factors such as the home environment, students' prior knowledge, and their attitudes towards learning. These aspects are addressed in the program's self-paced implementation course, *Success With Simplify Writing®*.



## Research Brief

### TEACHER MODELING & EXEMPLAR USAGE

**The Simplify Writing® core program provides age-appropriate model texts for every unit. These texts reflect the elements of the writing genre that students need to replicate in their own writing.** In a study by Charney and Carlson, they examined the effects of modeling on the writing development of young students. They found that students who were exposed to a model text in their writing instruction were able to incorporate more of the genre's characteristics into their own writing, as well as generate more ideas and produce longer pieces of writing. The authors suggest that students can learn from model texts by analyzing the features and structure of the text, and by applying that knowledge to their own writing. During the study, the organization scale revealed significant overall differences between the Models group and No-Models group. Students in the Models group received higher scores than students without models [Models = 4.1, Control = 3.7,  $F(1, 80) = 6.4, p < .01$ ]. This result may reflect better organization of sentences within sections as well as inclusion of information in the appropriate section (Charney & Carlson, 1995).





## Research Brief

### GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Graphic organizers provide a necessary visual element for our English Language Learners and visual learners. Studies show that students using a concept-mapping learning strategy perform higher and retain what they have learned longer than students who limit themselves to text-only strategies. **The Simplify Writing® core and intervention materials use consistent graphic organizers within and across grade levels to further increase retention.**

In a review of 35 different research pieces, which included experimental and quasi-experimental studies, Kansızoğlu found that the use of graphic organizers significantly improved language teaching and learning outcomes across various language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Kansızoğlu, 2017). Graphic organizers were also found to be more effective when used as a pre-writing tool, as they helped students organize their thoughts and structure their writing. The article concludes that the use of graphic organizers can be beneficial in language teaching and learning, as they help improve students' comprehension and retention of information, enhance critical thinking skills, and facilitate the learning process.



## Research Brief

### CONSISTENT AND TIMELY FEEDBACK

Feedback is the cornerstone of revision during the writing process. **Simplify Writing® includes strategies to incorporate both peer and teacher feedback. The *Success With Simplify Writing®* course includes modules to help teachers implement these strategies into their classrooms on a daily basis.** The program instructs teachers to base their feedback around the core principle that a “where to next” or “how to improve this work” comment is necessary for student improvement (Hattie, 2019).



## Research Brief

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