



Case Study: Simplify Writing® Helps 8th Grade ELA Teacher Boost Student Writing and Grammar Proficiency

Background

Amy Hill, an 8th grade English Language Arts (ELA) and Writing teacher at Glasgow Middle School, part of Glasgow Independent Schools, faced a new challenge last summer. Transitioning from teaching 6th grade to 8th grade, she needed a structured and effective curriculum that would help her navigate this change. She discovered Simplify Writing® through our training and was immediately drawn to its structured approach, which breaks down writing concepts into manageable, bite-sized pieces. After attending a training session and exploring a free unit, she decided to implement the program in her classroom due to its user-friendly and flexible format. As Amy described, "The training, along with access to a free unit, completely captivated me... It quickly became an essential part of my teaching toolkit."

Implementation

Amy collaborated closely with the other 8th grade teacher, who had not yet incorporated writing or grammar into their instruction. Together, they strategically integrated these elements into the curriculum at key points to maximize student growth. This collaborative effort aligned their teaching and ensured a more meaningful and impactful experience for their students. "We collaborated closely to strategically integrate these elements into our curriculum, ensuring they were placed at the most effective points to maximize student growth," Amy explained.

While Amy did not have a dedicated writing block, she taught a full-year ELA class and a 9-week writing elective. She integrated writing into her reading instruction to ensure consistent practice. The students, who initially struggled with writing and grammar proficiency, gradually adjusted to the new structure. "Since many students struggled with writing and grammar proficiency, it took some time for them to adjust to the new setup," she noted.

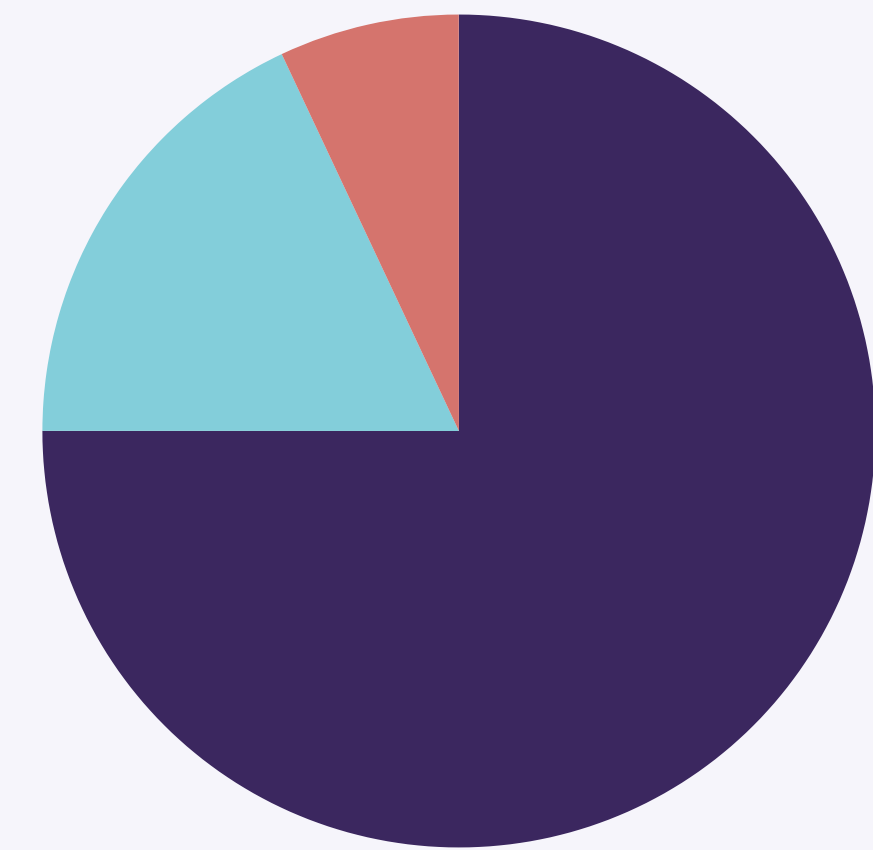
The use of mentor texts as models and a clear breakdown of each part of the writing process provided a scaffolded approach that helped students better understand writing. "The students especially appreciated the mentor texts as models and how each part of the writing process was clearly broken down and explained," said Amy.

Outcome

The structured, systematic lesson format of Simplify Writing® benefited both Amy and her students. Even lower-ability students found success as the curriculum broke writing down into manageable chunks. Its design, which breaks down writing into manageable chunks, allowed even my lower-ability students to find success," Amy shared. By the end of the year, many students who were initially reluctant to attempt essays were writing independently and performing well. Notably, 75% of her students scored Proficient or Distinguished on their On-Demand Writing assessments, and another 18% achieved Apprentice-level scores. This highlights the effectiveness of the curriculum's step-by-step approach in building students' confidence and skills as writers.

The grammar instruction also yielded positive outcomes. At the start of the year, many students struggled to identify and correct errors in their writing. By first focusing on specific grammar standards and then adopting a holistic approach, students developed proficiency in spotting and correcting mistakes. "By the end of the year, 76% of my students scored Proficient or Distinguished on their Editing and Mechanics assessments, with an additional 16% reaching the Apprentice level," Amy reported. This improvement demonstrated a significant enhancement in their grammar skills.

On-Demand Writing Assessment Scores



- Proficient or Distinguished (75%)
- Apprentice-Level (18%)
- Novice (7%)

Lasting Impact

The implementation of Simplify Writing® in Amy Hill's classroom led to substantial improvements in both writing and grammar proficiency among her 8th grade students. The program's direct, systematic approach allowed students to gain a deeper understanding of writing, while the collaborative efforts with her colleague ensured that writing and grammar were effectively integrated into the curriculum. "By the end of the year, many students who were initially reluctant to attempt essays were writing independently and performing well," Amy reflected. The success stories of her students, as evidenced by their improved assessment scores, reflect the significant impact of using a structured and flexible curriculum. Amy Hill's experience demonstrates how thoughtful curriculum choices and collaborative planning can lead to meaningful growth in student performance.

