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Troia, G. A. (2009). *Instruction and Assessment for Struggling Writers: Evidence-based practices*. NY: The Guilford Press.

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Reviewed by Katherine A. Bobak & Caven S. Mcloughlin
Kent State University

We begin with an overview of contemporary best-practice and empirical findings about writing assessment and intervention in order to provide context for two books of interest.

Of the traditional “three Rs”—*Reading, Writing and Arithmetic*—the skill that has received the least attention in research literature is writing. Reading and mathematics have been the focus of schools’ efforts to improve academic performance largely because mastery of those skills are prime determinants for whether a school meets NCLB’s Adequate Yearly Progress. Even though writing may be the neglected sibling in research about the academic fundamentals, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB; 2002) regulations explicitly outline requirements for

writing assessment and instruction. The two main aspects of writing assessment and instruction/intervention are the *process* (planning, generation and revision) and the *product* (e.g., words, sentences).

Writing Assessment

The process of writing is so varied and complex that it requires detailed analysis in order to discover which part (or parts) of the process need assistance. Common ways for assessing writing include holistic and analytic rubrics, portfolio appraisal, curriculum-based measurement, and language-based assessment. The process can be assessed by two types of rubrics: holistic and analytic. Whereas holistic rubrics provide scores based on an overall impression of the writing, analytic rubrics look at component traits and rate them independently (Knoch, 2009). Holistic rubrics are quicker to administer and would be appropriate for overall writing proficiency, but they lack the detailed analysis necessary for diagnostically pinpointing a student's strength and weakness. Analytic rubrics are more specific but as a consequence are more time-consuming to complete. Thus, they are more appropriate for the identification of student strengths and weaknesses because of the level of detail they provide. One example of an assessment that evaluates the writing process is *writing portfolios* because they usually contain samples of written works in varying stages of completion.

Writing products can be evaluated through word counts, frequency counts of specific types of words or phrases, or paragraph and sentence lengths. An example of a product-focused writing assessment is curriculum-based measurement (CBM). This measurement system typically evaluates writing at three points during the school year to track progress and improvement. Locally developed CBM employs area resources to produce writing prompts while nationally developed measures, such as AIMSweb, provide age-appropriate prompts and access to pre-developed database systems (AIMSweb, 2008). AIMSweb data, for example, includes word counts (Total Words Written), grammar (Correct Writing Sequences), and spelling

(Correctly Spelled Word). CBM offers critical information that schools can use to improve students' performances on writing assessments before students are assessed at the state and national levels.

State and national writing proficiency assessments aim to investigate whether or not writing benchmarks are being met. One limiting issue with proficiency assessments is that benchmarks differ from state to state, which leads to variability in the construct of state-assessments and also in interpretation of student performance at the national level. To explore this issue, Jeffery (2009) investigated writing assessment prompts and scoring rubrics from 41 state and national direct writing assessments (DWAs). Because the NCLB allows each state to develop its own benchmarks for the three levels of achievement (*basic*, *proficient*, and *advanced*), one might expect the focus, or prompt, of each state's DWA to vary. The results of Jeffery's (2009) study revealed that the majority of state DWAs focused on persuasive, argumentative, or explanatory writing as the key indicators.

Greater variability occurred when comparing the amount of time allotted to complete a task, the grade levels for assessment, and the methodology for scoring writing samples. Although the genre prompts may be similar, the rubrics varied on aspects such as whether an analytic or holistic approach to scoring was used or whether the rubric contained four or six graded criteria. Interestingly, while national DWAs, such as the ACT and SAT, had different scoring criteria for different prompt genres, state DWAs, in general, did not use rubrics specific to the prompt genre. The national rubrics were more holistic than the state rubrics, which is understandable because of the sheer volume of assessments to score at the national level. More detailed rubrics would simply take too long to complete at the national level. One of Jeffery's (2009) criticisms of DWAs is that the theoretical background for each state's assessment design was unclear—only one state explained the theoretical constructs underpinning its assessment. If such explanations were to be provided, teachers could use the explanation to inform instruction. A second criticism is that the lack of substantial variability between state assessments

questions the purpose of allowing states to develop independent benchmarks. Having only one national standard would lower the cost of developing and implementing state assessments, reduce the academic problems that a student may face when moving to a new state, increase state accountability, and possibly increase national writing proficiency. A longer term goal, Jeffery (2009) suggests, would be to develop international assessments and benchmarks.

As typing becomes the dominant form of written communication in the United States and as students complete the majority of essays on the computer (especially by the high school level), whether to assess writing through pencil and paper or computers is increasingly becoming an issue of importance in writing assessment. As part of a research study, Old Dominion University in Virginia allowed its students to choose between taking the handwritten or keyboarded version of their writing proficiency exit exam. The proportion of students passing each version of the exam was very similar: 69.1% of those who took the handwritten version passed and 71.2% of those who took the keyboarded version passed (Whithaus, Harrison, & Midyette, 2008).

Differences between the two versions of the exam appeared during interviews with students and raters. Students preferred keyboarding because of its speed, familiarity, and legibility. They also felt that proofreading was more efficient and visually cleaner because it was easier to notice errors. Those who preferred the handwritten version cited its reliability and felt more comfortable writing out their work by hand. Because some students still prefer writing essays by hand and because there may be insufficient computing capacity for all students to use that format, the two-choice method employed in this study is perhaps still desirable. Raters, on the other hand, felt that students' proofreading abilities were diminished in the keyboarded exams even though these students did not receive lower marks for such errors. Raters found handwritten exams to be more informal and to contain more confusing organization because students would draw arrows to indicate inserts or rearrangement. An important implication listed by Whithaus

et al. (2008) is that handwriting and keyboarding may represent *different cognitive processes* and, thus, engage different composing skills. They describe current research as inconclusive and suggest that, if handwriting and keyboarding measure different composing skills, different assessments may become necessary. More importantly, they suggest that students should be allowed to take a writing assessment using their preferred modality in order to increase their comfort level, and thus provide a score that more accurately reflects their abilities.

Another important issue in writing assessment is the assessment of students with special needs, such as English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities. The NCLB (2002) requires that *all* students receive writing assessment instruction and be included in standardized testing at the state level. Their performance is categorized into groups in Adequate Yearly Progress reports (e.g., ELLs or students with disabilities), such that a significantly poor performance negatively impacts a school district. Accommodations to writing assessment and instruction may only be provided if these accommodations are detailed in a student's individualized education program.

Writing Interventions

An appropriate and detailed assessment promotes the selection of a suitable intervention for writing. In the same way that there is no one kind of writing assessment that investigates all possible aspects of writing, there is also no catch-all format for writing intervention. Writing interventions focus on all aspects of the process, from prewriting to structuring to revising. Recently, Graham and Perin (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of writing interventions for students in grades 4 through 12 using writing quality as judged by holistic rubrics as the outcome measure. They described four general categories for writing interventions: the process writing approach, explicit teaching of skills, scaffolding, and alternative composition methods (i.e., computer word processing). The definition for the process writing approach that Graham and Perin (2007) provide is somewhat cumbersome because it encompasses

multiple definitions, since current literature on process writing has yet to develop a common definition. In general, however, the process writing approach involves increasing opportunities for writing, providing students with *real* audiences, cycling through the writing process multiple times, boosting peer interaction and support, and personalizing instruction. The average weighted effect size for the studies that investigated the process writing approach was small but statistically significant ($d = 0.32$), indicating that process writing interventions do improve writing quality. The second category (explicit teaching for skills, processes and knowledge) included instruction of grammar, sentence combination, strategy instruction, and summarization. Strategy instruction focuses on teaching students to plan, revise, and edit text independently, and/or teaching strategies specific to different types of writing (e.g., persuasive essays). The impact of teaching sentence combination, strategy instruction, and summarization on writing quality ranged from medium to large effect sizes ($d = 0.50, 0.82$, and 0.82 , respectively). Explicit teaching of grammar yielded a small effect size of -0.32 , meaning that grammar instruction did not improve students' writing quality. The authors advise that this finding be considered carefully; for, in all but one of the studies included in their analysis, the grammar condition was the control condition rather than the experimental condition.

The third category in the meta-analysis incorporated scaffolding of students' writing (i.e., providing students with support throughout the writing process). Prewriting, inquiry (developing ideas and content through data gathering and analysis), peer assistance, model study (examination of sample texts to guide writing), and goal setting all fall under this category. The average effect sizes of studies of prewriting, inquiry, and model study were small ($0.32, 0.32$, and 0.25 , respectively), whereas peer assistance and goal setting interventions yielded medium effects on writing quality (0.75 and 0.70 , respectively). The use of computer word processing programs was the only intervention included in the fourth category, alternative composition methods. Computer programs had a medium effect on quality of writing ($d = 0.55$). In the research literature,

process writing, strategy instruction, and word processing have received the most attention (Graham & Perin, 2007). As support for the findings from the meta-analysis, Fidalgo, Torrance, and García (2008) found that a strategy instruction intervention improved sixth-grade students' pre-planning, writing quality, focus on the reader, and attentiveness to the importance of text structure. Other studies have also supported peer-assistance (Saddler, Asaro, & Behforooz, 2008), word processing (Christensen, 2004), and other interventions as effective methods of improving writing quality.

Similar interventions have also been shown to be effective with younger students; however, the focus of interventions for much younger students is rather different because writing instruction at younger ages is focused on basic skills such as phonemic awareness and letter-sound fluency. For example, Craig (2006) investigated an adapted interactive writing intervention in Kindergarten students and focused on phonological awareness, spelling, and early reading development. The study compared two interventions. The first was the adapted interactive writing intervention, which involved direct instruction, demonstrations, and practice; the second intervention was based on games. Both interventions were structured around phoneme segmentation and letter-sound learning. The adapted interactive writing intervention was more successful than the game intervention in improving word identification, passage comprehension, and reading development. There was no difference between the two groups in phonemic awareness and spelling achievement.

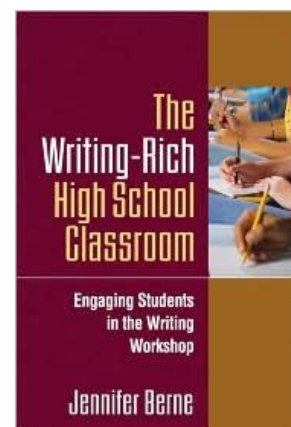
Particular attention is necessary when creating interventions for students with special needs, particularly those with learning disabilities (LD) and those who are learning English. Both students with LD and those with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) experience impairments in organization and processing that further complicate the writing process (Graham & Harris, 1997; Myles et al., 2003). Deatline-Buchman and Jitendra (2006) examined an intervention aimed at improving argumentative writing skills in five fourth-grade students, all of whom had been

diagnosed as LD. The intervention involved explicit instruction of key components like purpose and audience, and structural components such as introduction and body paragraphs. This strategy instruction type of intervention was able to improve quantitative aspects of the students' performance, such as word count and time spent prewriting. Students were also able to generalize these quantitative skills to other writing tasks. Only three of the five students, however, improved qualitative aspects of their argumentative writing skills, such as content and focus. A case study of a student with ASD (specifically Asperger syndrome) conducted by Delano (2007) revealed that students with ASD may also benefit from strategy instruction interventions. In that study, the student received an evidence-based writing intervention called Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD; Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1991). SRSD focuses on explicit teaching of all stages of the writing process, teacher-student scaffolding, and self-talk. SRSD also addresses student motivation and self-perception of ability to meet task demands. In the Delano (2007) study, the student with Asperger improved in both qualitative and quantitative aspects of writing.

The Berne Text

The text is organized into the following chapters, each of which is based on a specific step in the writing workshop. The book also contains an Appendix, a References section, and an Index.

1. The High School Writing Workshop
2. Setting Up and Managing the Writing Workshop
3. Writing Assignments
4. Planning and Prewriting
5. Initial Drafting
6. Writing Is Revising
7. Peer Feedback
8. Teacher Feedback
9. Correctness in the Writing Workshop
10. Evaluating Student Work



Synopsis and Highlights

The initial chapter provides an introduction to the high school writing workshop. This approach to improving secondary school students' writing could be referred to as 'teaching the writing process.' Essentially, the writing process in Berne's book follows the sequence: prewriting, planning, drafting, giving and receiving feedback, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing. At the end of the chapter, Berne provides definitions for three buzzwords: *technology*, *differentiation*, and *assessment*. Technology describes the variety of available computer-based writing tools (e.g., blogs and word processing programs), differentiation refers to modifying instruction and assignments based on individual students' needs, and assessment describes evaluating student work through feedback on individual steps of the writing process and overall performance. These three issues are discussed in each chapter. She ends the chapter by listing the authors/scholars that have influenced her understanding about writing, teaching and learning; the implication is that much of the content of this book was derived from her mentor's work and those interested in further reading on this subject might wish to further investigate those authors.

Jennifer Berne, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor and Chair of Reading and Language at National-Louis University. Dr. Berne has spent 20 years as a writing teacher and an educator of writing teachers. Her research interests include writing, comprehension, and teacher professional development.



Setup and management of the writing workshop is the focus of the second chapter. Berne describes the organization of the proposed workshop on both a weekly and a daily basis. She explains that the writing workshop is more like a Fine Arts class where the teacher circulating around the classroom is more typical than direct instruction. After introducing a writing genre or grammatical skill, the teacher talks about how to get started and models for her students and leads them in practice. She then debriefs the student as to the difficulties they may encounter, and prepares them for independent writing. This sequence is called the *mini-lesson*, which begins each class. The remainder of the class, it is proposed, should be dedicated to students working on their writing independently and reviewing their work with peers and with the teacher. Berne emphasizes flexibility in developing a schedule. She provides weekly and daily examples of workshop schedules.

While setting up the writing workshop, teachers will need to *construct appropriate assignments*. The third chapter describes how to select a genre on which to focus, how to set boundaries for the assignments (e.g., *personal* versus *private* writing), how to manage student differences in pacing, and how to incorporate lessons on preparing for high-stakes tests. The first genre should be something about which the students are already comfortable writing. This will allow the students to focus on becoming comfortable with the setup of the writing workshop and not worry as much about the writing. Berne acknowledges the need to prepare students for high-stakes tests, though the setup of such tests does not mesh well with the setup of the writing workshop. Unlike the format of the writing workshop, during high-stakes tests students do not have unlimited time to write, they are not allowed to engage in peer review, and they do not receive feedback. These testing format conditions might usefully be incorporated into some writing workshop activities in order to provide practice for high-stakes testing. Berne suggests, however, that this genre of writing may be best addressed either in a later focus of the writing workshop or fully outside of the writing workshop context.

The fourth chapter begins the discussion of the writing process—*specifically prewriting and planning*. Prewriting involves coming up with an idea, while planning involves taking that idea and thinking it through. Berne suggests that teachers engage students in freewriting, brainstorming, imaging (i.e., drawing pictures), talking, observation notebooks, and technology as ways for students to generate ideas. These activities would be ungraded and unshared to allow students more creative freedom.

Drafting is discussed in the fifth chapter. The mini-lesson on drafting should emphasize that drafting is a low-risk activity because its main purpose is to develop ideas, not to worry about structure. Students are often too worried about the end of their paper and do not want to spend time drafting. Drafts should focus on the elements of writing: audience, purpose, voice, word choice, and organization. Berne advises that some students may prefer their first draft to later drafts

and suggests that teachers allow one paper per year be submitted in draft form if the student believes that version is his or her best exemplar. Students who frequently prefer their first drafts to later drafts may let peers influence their writing too much or such students may simply be stubborn about changing their original draft. Either way, allowing students to choose which draft to call their 'final' draft offer teachers valuable insights into individual students' writing processes.

Berne states that the cornerstone of the writing workshop is *teaching revision*. This sixth chapter describes different approaches to revision, including allowing the first draft time to weather, analyzing favorite authors' styles, and providing feedback through collaborative classroom activities. During the mini-lesson, the teacher should lead practice in adding, subtracting, and moving various chunks of text. An important point of this lesson is to teach students when it is appropriate to move on to the second draft. Students should also keep track of their edits by highlighting or underlining what they did so that the teacher can see what has changed.

Chapter seven describes the *peer feedback process*. Students may become concerned that their peers will be reading and commenting on their work and if not done correctly, this process could have a negative impact on student writing. Introducing peer feedback to students begins by emphasizing the power of having multiple people provide opinions. Berne describes two types of peer feedback: the peer group and the buddy. The peer group is usually comprised of four students. Each student reads his or her writing out loud while the other three students follow along. The other three students provide immediate feedback while author-student takes notes of their suggestions. The purpose of the peer group is to create a community-of-writers to increase the students' levels of involvement in the workshop. Students support each other's efforts through praising positive aspects and suggesting areas for improvement. In order to encourage constructive feedback, the teacher provides examples and helps students during their first rounds of peer feedback in the mini-lesson. The teacher will

also debrief the students as to the purpose of peer feedback. The teacher may want to provide guidelines for issues like time and facilitation so that students stay on task and ultimately feel productive. On a smaller scale, the buddy version of peer feedback involves two students each exchanging their papers, reading them silently, and providing feedback through either verbal or written responses to a few questions.

Teachers may feel overwhelmed by *the task of providing feedback to all students*—a common occurrence in all classrooms and the focus of chapter eight. The writing workshop promotes a low emphasis on teacher out-of-classroom time. Early mini-lessons should prepare students for receiving teacher feedback. Teachers should view the second draft of student writing—the first having been reviewed in the peer groups. The workshop involves two forms of teacher feedback, oral and written. When responding orally to a paper, the student will engage in a conference with the teacher and read his or her paper out loud. While the student is reading, the teacher takes notes and then provides oral feedback when the student is done reading. These conferences should only take about five to seven minutes—brevity is necessary when responding to all students in a classroom. The feedback should follow Berne’s three-tiered model: responding as a person (e.g., “I felt happy when I read this section”), responding as a member of the writing community (e.g., “If you could expand this part, it might clear up my confusion about the end”), and responding as a teacher (e.g., “It seems like you have having difficulty with this technique. Do you think that more practice would help you?”). Berne provides a template for the written version of teacher feedback in this chapter, which generally involves two comments per page aimed at prompting revision and a more comprehensive end comment that follows the three-tiered model described earlier in the chapter. These revisions should not be graded—only the final product should receive a grade.

Chapter nine *differentiates editing from proofreading*. Proofreading requires students to simply hunt for errors. Editing requires students to look for more than minor mistakes in word-

usage, formatting, and so forth; they must remember what they have learned about the nature of language, including aspects of language that they may not understand very well. The mini-lesson on editing should emphasize editing *for* a particular convention of Standard Written English. Teachers should choose two to four areas of need on which to focus during the writing workshop and focus only on one area at a time until all students achieve mastery. By focusing on only two to four grammatical conventions, students are less likely to feel overwhelmed. When grading, teachers should only remove points for what is currently being taught. Berne highlights the positives and negatives of using technology for proofreading and editing.

The final chapter describes *how to evaluate the works produced in the writing workshop*. While cumbersome, portfolios are the essential means for providing feedback in the writing workshop because they bring recognition to the power of the writing process; each final draft is stapled on top of all previous drafts and comments. Students are required to write a cover letter for their portfolio which may include their rationale for selecting certain papers over others. Portfolio reviews should be conducted no more than three times throughout the year, Berne suggests. Grades should be based on both the student's process/progress and the product and also include an overall grade. In order to evaluate student work, teachers may use rubrics but they should keep in mind that rubrics are not as subjective as they appear to be. Berne provides multiple kinds of rubrics in this chapter. The collective work of the student is the most important aspect of the portfolio review. Another aspect of the portfolio is publishing student work. With today's technology, publishing may be as simple as typing up a handwritten paper and printing it out or sharing the final products through sites like *Facebook* or blogs.

Evaluation of Berne's *The Writing-Rich High School Classroom*

Throughout this text, Berne emphasizes the high degree of flexibility embedded in the writing workshop approach, demonstrating an understanding that one method will not

suit all teachers, all students, and all classrooms. In order to provide a flexible structure to the writing workshop, Berne discusses the logistics of each step and inserts multiple examples of her own alongside ‘real life’ examples provided by teachers who have employed this type of workshop in their classrooms. She also suggests that teachers provide sample correct examples alongside incorrect examples of each genre or skill.

A prominent positive element in Berne’s text is the quality of her explanations of the rationale and research behind each step of the high school writing workshop. One possible criticism about her rationale and research could be that the much of the research she includes is fairly dated—more than seven years since publication. This may be due to a relative lack of research on writing workshops at the secondary level versus earlier grade levels, as Berne mentions and as described in the introduction to this review.

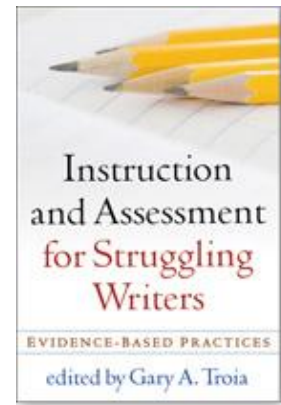
Another positive of this writing workshop is that there are no predeveloped materials that teachers are required to purchase to implement the system. The only materials necessary for this workshop are those that can readily be found in the teacher’s classroom and student’s own supply. If students are writing by hand, a journal or notebook is all that is required. If students are typing on a computer, a flashdrive or online service such as GoogleDocs is all that is required. Thus, Berne has ensured that the writing workshop can flourish as technology advances. She emphasizes that even if a classroom only has access to one computer, the variation among students’ pacing make the sharing of that one computer bearable.

Overall, Berne’s writing workshop employs many of the successful intervention strategies discussed in the introduction to this review, such as direct instruction and the incorporation of technology. This book would be an extremely useful tool for anyone desiring to implement a writing workshop at the secondary level. Primary level classrooms may also benefit from Berne’s book with only minor modifications to appropriate aspects such as student independence.

The Troia Text

Organization

The edited-text is organized into the following chapters, which are divided into five self-contained sections. An Introduction and Index are also included. Along with the title and authors of each chapter, each author's academic or professional affiliation is listed below.



Part I. Theoretical Grounding: The Nature of Writing Problems in Struggling Writers

1. Multiple Processes That Matter in Writing Instruction and Assessment Self-Efficacy (Virginia W. Berninger, Noelia P. Garcia, & Robert D. Abbot; University of Washington at Seattle's College of Education)
2. Procrastination in the Writing of Students with Learning Disabilities (Robert M. Klassen, & Christine Welton; University of Alberta's Department of Educational Psychology)

Part II. Contemporary Classroom Writing Instruction and Struggling Writers

3. The Effects of Writing Workshop Instruction on the Performance and Motivation of Good and Poor Writers (Gary A. Troia, Shin-ju C. Lin, Brandon W. Monroe, & Steven Cohen; University of Washington at Seattle's College of Education, Eastern Connecticut State University's Department of Education, & Seattle Public Schools, respectively)
4. Connecting Reading and Writing Instruction for Struggling Learners (Timothy Shanahan; University of Illinois at Chicago's Department of Curriculum and Instruction)
5. Informational Writing across the Curriculum (Carol Sue Englert, Cynthia M. Okolo, & Troy V. Mariage; Michigan State University's Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education)

Part III. Teaching Composing to Struggling Writers

6. Teaching Composing to Students with Learning Disabilities: Scientifically Supported Recommendations (Steve Graham, Natalie G. Olinghouse, & Karen R. Harris; Vanderbilt University's Department of Special Education, University of

Connecticut's Department of Educational Psychology & Vanderbilt University's Department of Special Education, respectively)

7. Written Composition Instruction and Intervention for Students with Language Impairment (Nickola W. Nelson, Froma P. Roth, & Adelia M. Van Meter; Western Michigan University's Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology, University of Maryland, College Park's Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences, & Western Michigan University's College of Health and Human Services, respectively)
8. Teaching Written Expression to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners (Anne W. Graves & Robert Rueda; San Diego State University's Department of Special Education & University of Southern California's Rossier School of Education, respectively)
9. Using Technology to Teach Composing to Struggling Writers (Charles A. MacArthur; University of Delaware's School of Education)

Part IV. Teaching Spelling to Struggling Writers

10. Teaching Spelling to Students with Language and Learning Disabilities (Louisa C. Moats; Sopris West Educational Services)
11. Spelling and English Language Learning (Pauline B. Low & Linda S. Siegel; University of British Columbia's Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education)

Part V. Assessment of Writing By Struggling Writers

12. Classroom Portfolio Assessment for Writing (Maryl Gearhart; University of California at Berkeley's Graduate School of Education)
13. Assessment of Student Writing with Curriculum-Based Measurement (Betty J. Benson & Heather M. Campbell; University of Minnesota at Minneapolis's Disability Services)
14. Language-Based Assessment of Written Expression (Cheryl M. Scott; Rush University Medical Center's Department of Communication Disorders and Sciences)

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Synopsis and Highlights

The book begins with an introduction by the editor, Gary Troia, and contains paragraph-long synopses of each chapter. The first section of the book describes the theoretical background for the difficulties faced by students with writing problems. The two chapters that make up the first section act as an introduction to basic theories and issues discussed in the remaining chapters of the book.

In the first chapter, Berninger, Garcia, and Abbot delve into the *history of writing instruction and assessment* by describing the paradigm shifts in the field. They provide a comparison of the two views on spelling development. The first perspective is that one must pass sequentially through the stages of phonology, orthography, and morphology development, and the second is that these three stages occur concurrently. The chapter also focuses on how writing is integrated with other systems (e.g., reading) and what developmental disorders are relevant to writing (e.g., dysgraphia). They conclude by stating that the development of writing skills is currently thought of as too simplistic, and, as is commonly concluded about the field of writing research, they posit that more research is necessary.

Klassen and Wolten focus on *how self-efficacy (motivation) and procrastination affect writing in students with learning disabilities* (LD) in the second chapter. Writing is especially susceptible to procrastination in students with LD, they state, because of the variety of task demands for which students feel that they lack the right skills. Klassen and Wolten discuss this issue by providing an overview of current research in spelling and writing, student and teacher perspectives on self-efficacy, and procrastination. The bulk of this research was conducted by Klassen. Implications for practice and research are discussed at the end of the chapter. Examples include providing direct instruction to all students on how to manage the various task demands of writing and encouraging students to seek help in order to diminish procrastination and improve the quality of their writing.

The second section of the book focuses on contemporary evidence-based practices in writing instruction for all students. Troia, Lin, Monroe, and Cohen describe how *writing workshop instruction affects academic performance and motivation* in both good and struggling writers. The format of this third chapter is similar to an empirical research article. In the beginning, the authors describe the basic elements of a writing workshop, with one day's time being split between a mini-lesson, writing, peer and teacher conferences, and sharing. Writing should constitute the majority of class time, about 20 to 30 minutes. The authors found that neither good nor poor writers benefited from the writing workshop—the only progress was found in the slightly improved quality of the samples from the good writers. They did find, however, that both good and poor writers were more motivated to write and that students of more experienced teachers gained more from the workshop. Possible teacher bias and a lack of a control group should be addressed in future studies. They conclude with speculations about factors that could improve the effectiveness of writing workshops: systematic teaching of transcription (i.e., handwriting and spelling), a focus on self-regulation through goal setting, progress monitoring, and self-evaluation.

In the fourth chapter, Shanahan concentrates on the *connection between reading and writing for struggling learners*. He describes how reading and writing can be taught simultaneously. For example, students can read excerpts of quality writing and discuss what makes the writing high-quality, or students can practice combining sentences by working with something they have read. Shanahan emphasizes the importance of highlighting the differences between reading and writing, especially in the development of reading and writing. In practice, struggling writers may not develop skills quickly but once they have the skills, they will likely still need more time in massed-practice instruction. In conclusion, Shanahan explains why integrating reading and writing instruction leads to successes in struggling learners and offers suggestions for effective teaching methods.

Englert, Okolo, and Mariage stray away from the usual focus on narrative texts by stressing *the importance of informational writing in multiple contexts* in the fifth chapter. There is not one organizational style that stays constant from curriculum to curriculum in informational writing, such as from history to biology. Even within one textbook, from paragraph to paragraph, the structure of the writing often changes. Overall, informational writing is hierarchical and recursive. General structures include compare-contrast, problem-solution, cause-effect, and opinion/persuasion. Graphic organizers, writing strategies, cognitive apprenticeship, and awareness are effective methods of familiarizing students with informational writing. The authors describe other useful organizational writing strategies, like mnemonic acronyms and diagramming. They delve into descriptions of inquiry writing activities, specifically in social studies and science, and end with a call for more research in literacy interventions with students with language learning disabilities (LLD) and other students struggling to read and write.

The third section covers teaching composing to struggling writers. In chapter six, Graham, Olinghouse, and Harris summarize experimental, quasi-experimental, and single-case design studies about *effective teaching strategies for students with LD who struggle with composing*. They also include qualitative studies about highly effective writing teachers. These studies are presented within a three-tiered model of intervention, focusing on the first two tiers, which describe universal and targeted levels of intervention. In the first tier, they list multiple recommendations (21, to be exact) for teaching writing to students. Since the first tier is universal in nature, these recommendations apply to all students, not only those with LD. Recommendations for this tier include explicit teaching of summarization of reading materials and implementing a process writing approach. In the second tier, using direct instruction to teach grammar and using word processing tools are examples of the 11 recommendations illustrated by the authors. The authors dive into a more detailed description of the tier II recommendations because these are the interventions that target students with LD, the focus of this chapter. They conclude by emphasizing that

evidence-based practices will only be effective if teachers are willing to implement them and if administrators support their use by providing appropriate professional development, resources, and a channel for teacher feedback.

Nelson, Roth, and Van Meter explore *composing instruction and intervention for students with language impairment (LI)* in the seventh chapter. The authors open the chapter by distinguishing among LI, LD, and LLD. Specifically, some students with LI may speak well but their writing is riddled with errors, while other students with LI may suffer from impaired spoken language abilities. Intervention and instruction for students with LI should include scaffolding from an adult mediator, collaboration among all adults involved (e.g., teachers, speech-language pathologists, parents), and sensitivity to cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The authors detail effective instruction and intervention at the discourse, sentence, and word levels of writing.

In chapter eight, Graves and Rueda describe *effective ways to teach written expression to culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students*. Certain sociocultural factors need to be taken into account when working with CLD students, such as how these students will likely need instruction in academic English, even if they speak English virtually fluently. The authors describe other linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic issues that must be considered when working with these students. They also explain sociocultural theory as a basis for teaching these students, emphasizing that learning is affected on individual, interpersonal, and community/institutional levels. Suggestions for approaching writing instruction at each level are offered. They conclude by listing specific factors that are unique to working with CLD students, including being aware of cultural understandings and practices.

MacArthur focuses on *the use of technology to teach composing to struggling writers* in the ninth chapter. As technology is a relatively recent development in writing instruction, there is a dearth of research in the field. In general, though, topics that have dominated the research are word processing

programs, specifically spell checking tools; transcription tools like speech recognition software, speech synthesis, word prediction; and planning and revising aides that prompt, outline, or provide automated essay evaluation. These topics are detailed in this chapter. MacArthur also identifies new areas for writing, like composing hypermedia (i.e., multimedia) and internet communication. MacArthur stresses that these tools should be only employed as aids because the technology alone is insufficient for instruction. Teachers should model appropriate use of the tools and give the students opportunities to practice.

The fourth section of the book focuses on teaching spelling. Moats opens the section at chapter ten with an overview of *how to teach spelling to students with learning and language disabilities*. She describes spelling as a complex coordination of motor, attention, and self-regulatory skills. Poor spelling affects note-taking skills and written expression and is evident in students with dyslexia and dysgraphia. Moats states that effective methods for teaching poor spellers includes concentration in the following areas: letter formation and handwriting, pronunciation and speech sound identification, orthography and morphology, irregular common words, and word origin. She also describes several helpful strategies, such as not penalizing a student for poor spelling when the purpose of an assignment does not include accurate spelling, allowing the use of technology, and permitting proofreading assistance for assignments that require accurate spelling.

Low and Siegel describe *spelling and English language learning* (ELL) in the eleventh chapter. They begin the chapter with an illustration of the differences and similarities between English and other languages based on orthography and the alphabetic principle. Two cross-linguistic theories provide the basis for most ELL research. The linguistic-interdependence hypothesis posits that there is a common underlying cognitive process to language development across all languages; any skills or deficits one may have in one's native language will transfer effortlessly to a second language. The script-dependent hypothesis states that success in the second language depends on the differences

between the two orthographies. Low and Siegel then detail the cognitive process underlying spelling: phonological processing, syntactic awareness, working memory, and visual/orthographic processing. They conclude the chapter with a description of how orthography affects spelling strategies and offer recommendations for teaching spelling to ELL students. Recommendations include qualitatively analyzing students' spelling, integrating reading and vocabulary with spelling instruction, increasing ELL students' exposure to English, and providing quality (rather than differentiated) instruction to ELL students.

The fifth and final section of the book focuses on the assessment of writing by struggling writers. This is an area, Troia states, that is plagued by limited research (a common refrain in the earlier chapters). In chapter twelve, Gearhart describes *classroom writing portfolio assessment* and opens the chapter with an overview of the historical and conceptual frameworks for writing portfolio assessment. She lists four common items contained in writing portfolios, which students have a role in selecting: work samples in various stages of development, writing developed in different contexts, authentic work (i.e., an assignment with a *real-world* purpose), and published work or raw samples with summaries or reflections. She then describes criteria for assessing the portfolios and details issues-to-consider when evaluating struggling writers, including students with LD or who are learning English. Struggling writers benefit from an emphasis on authentic writing and support for individualized goals, reflection and progress. Gearhart mentions the lack of research on writing portfolio assessment and voices her main concern about the subject: the technical complications of effectively using writing portfolios as large-scale assessment of writing, which include deciding who selects the writing samples, how the samples are scored, and how much time would be necessary.

In chapter thirteen, Benson and Campbell describe *how to use curriculum-based measurement (CBM) to assess student writing*. CBM offers a brief, easy to administer, and inexpensive way of tracking growth and providing data to inform instructional decision-making. Writing CBM requires students to respond

to a prompt within a given time period, about 3-5 minutes, and provides the following data: words written (WW), words spelled correctly (WSC), correct word sequences (CWS), incorrect word sequences (IWS), and correct minus incorrect word sequences (CIWS). Benson and Campbell review research on CBM and conclude that simple scoring procedures (e.g., calculating only WW and WSC) produce reliable data for students in early grades, while students in older grades require more complex data gathering. CWS, IWS, and CIWS should be calculated for older students; older students also produce more reliable and valid samples when given 10-minutes to complete the writing samples. Research on the form of the writing prompt (e.g., picture vs. story) suggests that form does not affect reliability and validity of the writing samples produced, but this lack of effect may change with grade level. Research also indicates that, while CBM can accurately reflect student gains in writing, standardized tests may be insufficiently sensitive. The authors conclude that struggling writers benefit from regular/weekly monitoring, and (once again) that ‘more research is needed’ in this area.

In the final chapter, number fourteen, Scott describes *language-based assessments of written expression that inform both practice and research*. Scott pulled writing samples from a database to conduct language-based assessment by focusing on written language at the word, sentence, and discourse levels. At the word level, Scott evaluates the number of different words used in the samples (i.e., lexical diversity) and the maturity, interest, and variety of words produced. At the sentence level, Scott evaluates syntax and grammar through the metrics of sentence length, clause density, and grammatical accuracy. At the discourse level, Scott evaluates the samples in a more general way by measuring productivity. Throughout the chapter, Scott weaves in research studies that have evaluated the measures used in each level of language-based assessment. To conclude, Scott states that some aspects of language, like lexical diversity, depend on other levels, like overall text length, and evaluators need to keep this in mind when conducting language-based assessment. Struggling writers may not struggle across all three levels, either. Scott concludes that

evaluators should also consider students' other language abilities or disabilities (*and that more research is needed in this area*). Overall, however, language-based assessment can provide useful and detailed information about students' writing abilities, it is posited.

Evaluation of the Text

Troia's book offers a comprehensive overview of important topics in the field of writing assessment and intervention. Some chapters emphasize the importance of writing in classes other than just language arts. Other chapters present the practical implications of the topic discussed in those chapters. Each chapter offers evidence-based opinions, providing the reader with a review of the research pertinent to each topic. As to be expected from the book's title, every chapter addresses struggling writers—but not every chapter focuses on the same type of struggle. The *struggling writer* focal to each chapter varies from students with LD or LLD or LI, to CLD or ELL students, to low-performing students. Thus, the book expands its practical utility by addressing a wide range of students. Another unique aspect of Troia's book is that the intervention chapters are presented *before* the assessment chapters because, as Troia explains in the introduction, "instructional content and processes must take center stage and guide what is assessed" (p. 3).

A common theme throughout Troia's book is a call for more research in the field of writing assessment and intervention. As presaged in the introduction to these two book reviews, writing usually receives the least attention of the "three Rs," and this latter book, while providing a comprehensive overview of the field, stresses the call for more research.

Other commonalities among the chapters make themselves apparent while reading each one, but some sort of concluding chapter or paragraph that offers a reflection on the commonalities among all the chapters could have strengthened these connections. Overall, however, this book would be useful for those wishing to better understand the research behind writing instruction and assessment practices, and for those desiring to learn effective strategies for

working with struggling writers. In the introduction Troia states that he hopes “this book may serve as a beneficial complement to the other excellent published manuscripts on writing” (p. 2-3). Because of its well-rounded and evidence-based focus on a variety of struggling writers, instruction and assessment strategies, and writing genres, this book is indeed a useful supplement to the field of writing assessment and intervention.

Comparison of the Texts

In order most effectively to compare Troia’s broadly-focused book with Berne’s narrowly-focused book, one must select the two chapters from Troia’s book that cover Berne’s topic: the third chapter, on the writing workshop, and the twelfth chapter, on classroom-wide writing portfolio assessment. Troia, Lin, Monroe, and Cohen criticize the writing workshop for its apparent lack of effectiveness—only the good writers improved slightly in the quality of their writing. The main issue with this criticism is that the study described in that chapter lacked a control group. On the other hand, the study revealed improved motivation in both good and struggling writers. Berne’s method of writing workshop instruction also incorporated the areas for improvement noted in the Troia chapter. For example, Berne’s method addresses the systematic teaching of transcription by emphasizing that instruction can be tailored to focus on issues like spelling. In the other relevant chapter in Troia’s book, Gearhart outlines effective ways of using a writing portfolio as a classroom-wide assessment tool. Berne effectively incorporates some of these practices, like publishing writing products and requiring students to write self-reflections. The chief concern that Gearhart might voice about Berne’s method is that Berne’s book lacks specific strategies for portfolio assessment of struggling writers. Berne’s method does, however, incorporate some of the aspects of writing portfolio assessment that Gearhart describes as helpful for struggling writers, like assigning real-world writing tasks and keeping portfolio assessment flexible.

The introduction to this review covered many other important aspects of writing assessment and intervention, most of which were either mentioned or detailed in both Berne's and Troia's books. For example, they both described the use of writing portfolios and technology as writing assessment and intervention techniques. They also discussed the incorporation of process writing strategies and peer and/or teacher scaffolding. Troia devoted chapters to CBM and LBA and his entire book focused on struggling writers. Berne simply discussed how to work with students who write at different paces but her method still includes strategies that do work with struggling writers. There were a few key elements missing from both books. The selection of the type of rubric, holistic or analytic, is certainly an important aspect of writing assessment. Assessors need to consider whether the purpose of the assessment is to grade overall performance, evaluate the use of specific strategies, or investigate a possible disability. Both books mention rubric selection in passing, but more emphasis could have been placed on the importance of selecting the most appropriate rubric.

Both books also briefly touched on how to tailor writing instruction to state- and nation-wide testing conditions for DWAs. From the research presented in the introduction to these reviews, the larger matters with state and national DWAs do not include how difficult it is to incorporate the testing conditions into the classroom. Rather, the research reveals concerns with how these DWAs are assessed, how they align with state and national standards of writing, and how they align with current research and theories. Another important issue in writing assessment and intervention relates to technology, which both books covered very well, especially when concerning technology's drawbacks. One issue within technology that was not detailed in either book, though, is the importance of considering the different underlying cognitive processes between handwriting and typing.

On the other hand, these books also mentioned topics that were not covered in the introduction to this review, likely because of a relative lack of research when compared to the

other areas that were described. Thus, the topics described in this paragraph are all areas of interest for future research. Both Berne and Troia described how to incorporate subjects other than writing into writing instruction. Specifically, both mentioned how to mesh reading and writing, while Troia's book also included suggestions for integrating writing with other subjects, like biology and history. A three-tiered, response to intervention (RTI)-style approach to writing is described in Troia's book. As RTI in general is a hot topic within the field of education, the combination of the dearth of research in writing and the popularity of RTI research make enticing the study of a three-tiered approach to writing.

Overall, Berne's *The Writing-Rich High School Classroom* and Troia's *Instruction and Assessment for Struggling Writers* both incorporate substantial reviews of research in the field of writing assessment and intervention. Berne's book would be most useful for teachers wishing to introduce a writing workshop to their classrooms and include writing portfolios as the primary assessment tool. Her emphasis on the flexibility of the writing workshop and incorporation of real-life examples are highlights. Troia's book would be most useful for anyone interested in the field of writing assessment and intervention, including those who might read Berne's book. The authors in Troia's book describe relevant theories, practical implications, and calls for more research.

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