



## Step Up to Writing Aligns With Current Research on Effective Writing Instruction

### Writing Next Outlines 11 Elements of Success\*

The Alliance for Excellent Education released the Writing Next report in October 2006. The report identifies 11 critical elements of effective writing instruction for middle and high school students. Writing Next and *Step Up to Writing* align as follows.

Writing Next Element	Step Up To Writing Alignment
<p><b>Writing Strategies:</b> Involves teaching students strategies for planning, revising, and editing</p>	<p><i>Step Up to Writing</i> teaches an explicit writing process for planning, pre-writing, writing, editing, and revising a written piece, with particular emphasis on planning. For each stage of this process, <i>Step Up to Writing</i> provides multiple strategies to help students achieve writing proficiency. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Color coding to create and analyze text</li> <li>• Paper folds to provide writing structure</li> <li>• Sentence strips to examine sentence structure and create more sophisticated sentences</li> <li>• Step-by-step planning to write paragraphs, summaries, multiparagraph compositions, and speeches</li> <li>• Two-column notes to support reading and studying</li> <li>• Concept maps to develop vocabulary</li> <li>• Informal outlines to plan for writing</li> <li>• Checklists to revise work</li> <li>• Editing marks and “editing checks” to edit writing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summarization:</b> Involves explicitly and systematically teaching students how to summarize text</p>	<p><i>Step Up to Writing</i> features several strategies dedicated to summary writing. These strategies, which clarify the process for writing summaries, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-Step Summary Paragraphs</li> <li>• Plot Line Summaries</li> <li>• Quick Sketch to develop a summary</li> <li>• Summaries Without Words</li> <li>• The 12-Word Trick</li> <li>• Retell (Primary Level only)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Collaborative Writing:</b> Involves students working together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions</p>	<p><i>Step Up to Writing</i> employs a solid instructional approach that comprises extensive modeling; guided practice; and large group, small group, paired, and independent practice. Typically, the strategies follow the “I do, we do, you do” approach to teaching. Students work together to develop ideas, draft, revise, and edit their work, making use of writing checklists and rubrics.</p>
<p><b>Specific Product Goal:</b> Involves assigning students specific, reachable goals for the writing they are to complete</p>	<p>All strategies and activities in <i>Step Up to Writing</i> are directly connected to specific, reachable objectives. These objectives are listed with the strategies and are flexible for different age groups and abilities. Students are provided numerous checklists and examples so that they understand the specific expectations of each writing assignment.</p>

\*Citation for all elements listed:  
Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing Next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools*. Carnegie Corporation: New York, NY

## Writing Next Element

## Step Up To Writing Alignment

<b>Word Processing:</b> Involves using computers and word processors as instructional supports for writing assignments	<i>Step Up to Writing</i> does not provide strategies or activities that explicitly involve word processing.
<b>Sentence Combining:</b> Involves teaching students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences	<i>Step Up to Writing</i> includes an entire section on sentence writing. Specific strategies teach students how to move from simple sentence construction to sentences that are rich in content, reflect good word choice, and share information in interesting and accurate ways. Instructional activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning to write sentences of many types and structures</li><li>• Learning the different parts of the sentence using sentence strips</li><li>• Integrating sentence variety</li><li>• Using strong action verbs</li><li>• Considering audience and purpose</li></ul>
<b>Pre-writing and Planning:</b> Involves engaging students in activities designed to help them generate or organize ideas for their compositions	<i>Step Up to Writing</i> emphasizes the pre-writing and planning aspects of the writing process. The program provides specific templates and strategies that help students generate and organize ideas for different types of writing. Strategies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two-column notes</li><li>• Planning with an informal outline</li><li>• Colored strips for outlines and paragraphs</li><li>• Determining key ideas</li><li>• Planning guides for the Accordion Paragraph</li><li>• Organization games</li><li>• Concept maps to develop ideas</li></ul>
<b>Inquiry Activities:</b> Involves engaging students in analyzing immediate, concrete data to help them develop ideas and content for a particular writing task	With <i>Step Up to Writing</i> , students are prompted to explore available data—stories, articles, essays, poems, and graphs—to help them develop ideas for writing content. Strategies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responding to quotations</li><li>• Note taking</li><li>• Making connections to text</li><li>• Developing questions in response to text</li><li>• Learning to describe people and objects in interesting and creative ways</li></ul>
<b>Process Approach Writing:</b> Involves interweaving a number of activities—stressing extended writing opportunities, writing for authentic audiences, personalized instruction, and cycles of writing—in a workshop environment	The basic premise behind <i>Step Up to Writing</i> is that extended writing opportunities must be afforded to students. The program provides those opportunities and addresses every step of the writing process. To make these writing opportunities meaningful, <i>Step Up to Writing</i> simulates an authentic audience through speech writing, examining perspective and audience, writing editorials (which students are encouraged to submit to a newspaper), and writing letters (business and informal).
<b>Study of Models:</b> Involves providing students with opportunities to read, analyze, and emulate models of good writing	Most <i>Step up to Writing</i> activities include numerous samples of good writing that students are expected to read and analyze for structure, content, and style. They are encouraged to emulate these models to improve their own writing.
<b>Writing for Content Learning:</b> Involves using writing as a tool for learning content material	Throughout <i>Step Up to Writing</i> , examples of writing from content areas other than language arts are provided. Many strategies include information and suggestions for use with writing in mathematics, social studies, science, humanities, and other content areas. In addition, there are specific sections that address writing in math and science.

