Big Write & VCOP

Best Teaching Practices that Enhance Writing

The methodology that underpins the Big Write, Big Talk, and V.C.O.P. approach to enhancing writing is based on best-practice pedagogy and supported by years of educational research. The research links below provide more information about these underlying principles.

The Methodology	Summary of Research	Further Reading
'If they can't say it, they can't write it' The power of talk is a key component to literacy success and a driving force of the Big Write, Big Talk, and the VCOP approach. We believe that students who are not engaged in talk in a writing session are not being given the opportunity to learn literacies. There should be multiple layers of talk that need to occur within a classroom for learning to take place. **Talk To Teach:** is primarily considered teacher-to-student talk, but student-student talk needs to be encouraged and utilised as a teaching tool. **Talk To Understand:** Turn and talk is an instructional routine in which students use content knowledge during a brief conversation with a peer. Students are provided with a short prompt to discuss content or skill. **Talk To Practice:** An opportunity to practise English skills without the demands of grammar and spelling hindering understanding. **Talk To Reflect:** We don't learn from experience; we learn from reflecting on the experience – John Dewey (1933)	Extended talk can lead to dialogic talk. Dialogic talk achieves common understandings through structured, cumulative questioning and discussion. **It is talk which enhances learning** (Alexander, 2008). (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985)	*Alexander, R. (2008). Culture, Dialogue and Learning: Notes on an Emerging Pedagogy In N. Mercer and S. Hodgkinson (Eds.), Exploring Talk in School, (pp. 91-114). London: Sage Publications.* https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/speakinglistening/Pages/teachingpracextended.aspx
	Speaking and listening – According to the Rose review (2006), 'listening and speaking are the roots of reading and writing'. The report stressed the 'importance of children learning cooperatively in language-rich contexts'. The key recommendation was that 'greater attention should be given to the development of children's speaking and listening skills because they provide the foundation for high quality phonic work'.	Rose, J, (2006). Independent review of the teaching of early reading: Final report. Department for Education and Skills, UK. Retrieved from https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/5551/2/report.pdf
	Research shows that having multiple opportunities to respond and actively engage in content learning improves student learning (MacSuga-Gage & Simonsen, 2015). The routine is a form of collaborative learning that promotes the use of new content in conversation to improve expressive language skills (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2013; Jones, Levin, Levin, & Beitzel, 2000).	MacSuga-Gage, A. S., & Simonsen, B. (2015). Examining the effects of teacher-directed opportunities to respond on student outcomes: A systematic review of the literature. Education and Treatment of Children, 38(2), 211–239. Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2013). Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
	Cazden's (2001) study found that classroom talk, and discussion can lead to improved language skills, such as more extensive vocabulary, better grammar, and increased fluency.	Cazden, C. (2001). Classroom discourse: The language of teaching and learning (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
	Reflective learning is a powerful practice that enhances understanding, promotes self-awareness, and deepens connections between new and existing knowledge.	Dewey, J. (1910) How we think, Boston, D.C.Heath. Bain, J., Ballantyne, R., Mills, C. & Lester, N. (2002) Reflecting on Practice: Student teachers' perspectives. Flaxton, QLD: Post Pressed

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Practise Makes Progress Writing tasks should happen every day, multiple times a day, where possible. This writing is encouraged in smaller chunks, such as note-taking, fragment completion, sentence-level work, planning, editing, short paragraphs, etc. This will allow the weekly targets for English to be revisited multiple times during the week, in a slightly different way, to allow deep understanding to develop. A Big Talk or Big Write is an opportunity for students to showcase and summarise their <u>weekly</u> learning targets. This knowledge transfer through an independent task allows students to embed skills into deeper-level learning. The transfer is both the aim of learning and the mechanism for deepening learning.	"We define deep learning as a period when students consolidate their understanding and apply and extend some surface learning knowledge to support deeper conceptual understanding . . . We think of this as a 'sweet spot' that will often take up more instructional time but can be accomplished only when students have the requisite knowledge to go deeper." – Hattie, Fisher and Frey (Visible Learning for Mathematics, 2017) "Transfer learning [is] the point at which students take their consolidated knowledge and skills and apply what they know to new scenarios and different contexts. It is also a time when students are able to think metacognitively, reflecting on their own learning and understanding." – Hattie, Fisher and Frey (Visible Learning for Mathematics, 2017)	*John Hattie, Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey, Visible Learning for Mathematics, 2017* *John Hattie, Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey, Visible Learning for Literacy, Grades K-12* *Implementing the Practices That Work Best to Accelerate Student Learning*
	Recalling information – According to research by Richard Mayer (1983), recall of conceptual principles and related information increases sharply with repetition.	Mayer, R.E. (1983). Can you repeat that? Qualitative effects of repetition and advance organizers on learning from science prose. Journal of Educational Psychology, 75(1), 40–49. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.75.1.40
	Consistent routines – John Fleming (2007) campaigns for a strong and consistent routine being witnessed in all classrooms: one that begins with an explanation to students of the lesson intent and includes fast-paced warm-ups focused on core content, explicit teaching using a simple process of 'I do, we do, you do', and constant revision and reinforcement. Routines within a school and in the classroom provide the right environment for learning to take place. For these routines to be effective, they must be practised consistently (Lester, Allanson & Notar, 2017).	Kleinhenz, E. & Fleming, J. (2007). Towards a moving school: Developing a professional learning and performance culture. Camberwell, Vic: ACER Press. Lester, R.R., Allanson, P.B. & Notar, C.E. (2017). Routines are the foundation of classroom management. Education, 137(4), 398–412.
	Cognitive load theory – Dylan Wiliam has described cognitive load theory as 'the single most important thing for teachers to know'. If a student's working memory is overloaded, there is a risk that they will not understand the content being taught and that their learning will be slow and/or ineffective. Cognitive load theory provides support for explicit models of instruction.	New South Wales. Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation. (2017). Cognitive load theory: Research that teachers really need to understand. Retrieved from www.cese.nsw.gov.au//images/stories/PDF/cognitive-load-theory-VR_AA3.pdf

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V.C.O.P Visualisation and Gamification VCOP stands for vocabulary, connectives, openers, and punctuation- four key elements that we teach students to target to create both a speaker's voice and a writer's voice when they are communicating. VCOP strategies are present in the English curriculum but are often not **explicitly taught** how to use these elements to efficiently and effectively target the audience for impact. We encourage the elements to be modelled and explicitly taught through all the literacy strategies: reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing. 'We want students to write to learn, not just learn to write!' If the teacher is not physically writing on the board to model, they are not truly teaching writing. We also insist skills are taught through oral-language games and activities- if you are not making learning fun, you are doing it wrong! Alongside gamification, visualisation is equally impactful. VCOP classroom displays, individualised writing support folder, visible learning goals, and modelled writing samples, should all be readily available for the students to access during literacies.	Explicit instruction – According to Archer and Hughes (2011), 'Instructional delivery is characterized by clear descriptions and demonstrations of a skill, followed by supported practice and timely feedback'. John Fleming (2014, 2015) says that 'for any learning activity to be effective it has to be taught step by step'. Using explicit instruction techniques in the classroom, he found that if you break skills up step by step, students will pick it up and can achieve far greater results.	Archer, A. & Hughes, C. (2011). Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching. New York, NY: Guilford Press. Meloney, D. (Presenter). (2014, Jun 6). Teaching methods Episode 1: Explicit instruction with John Fleming [Audio podcast with transcript]. Retrieved from www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/teaching-methods Meloney, D. (Presenter). (2015, Sep 25). Teaching methods: John Fleming – explicit instruction myths and strategies [Audio podcast with transcript]. Retrieved from www. teachermagazine.com.au/articles/john-fleming-explicit-instruction-myths-and-strategies
	Game-based learning is designed to balance theoretical content and learning through the use of games. Game based learning allows students to explore rigorous learning environments and concepts and targeted learning outcomes (Chen et al., 2018)	Chen, C., Liu, J., & Shou, W. (2018). How competition in a game-based science learning environment influences students' learning achievement, flow experience, and learning behavioral patterns. Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 21(2), 164-176. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26388392
	Gamified activities can promote higher levels of engagement and participation among language learners. The use of game elements and mechanics can make the learning process more enjoyable, leading to increased student involvement and interaction (Dehghanzadeh, 2021).	Dehghanzadeh, H., Fardanesh, H., Hatami, J., Talaee, E., & Noroozi, O. (2021). Using gamification to support learning English as a second language: a systematic review. Computer Assisted Language Learning, 34(7), 934-957.
	Gamification often encourages collaboration and social interaction among learners. Through gamified activities, students can work together, provide peer feedback, and engage in collaborative problem-solving, fostering not only language skills but also interpersonal and teamwork skills (Kayımbaşıoğlu & Haci, 2016).	Kayımbaşıoğlu, D., Oktekin, B., & Hacı, H. (2016). Integration of gamification technology in education. Procedia Computer Science, 102, 668-676.
	The application of games in education can foster notable improvements in both learning and education outcomes (Kula, 2021; Syafii, 2021)	Kula, S. S. (2021). Mind games with the views of classroom teachers. International Journal of Research in Education and Science (IJRES), 7(3), 747-766. https://doi.org/10.46328/ijres.1471

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Self-Regulated Learners and Analysers Student Analysis and Intensive Student Analysis occur regularly during the Big Write and VCOP approach to writing. In the early stages, students are explicitly taught how to self-edit and uplevel their writing, self-reflect, provide and discuss personal feedback, and set short-term learning targets for improvements. As they progress through the stages of learning, they will learn how to use more formal tools to analyse their writing and learning. They will learn the process of Breakdown Buddies, Highlighting, and the Student Criterion Scale. Reflection is regular and empowering for students as they take ownership of their learning journey.	According to Chickering and Gamson (1987, 3) active learning techniques underpin good undergraduate education: "Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorising pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write reflectively about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves".	Chickering, A. W. and Gamson, Z. F. (1987) Seven principles for good practice. AAHE Bulletin 39, 3-7. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED282491
	The ability to monitor their own thinking can help students identify what they do and do not know, but people are often unable to accurately judge their own learning and understanding.	Deans for Impact (2015). The Science of Learning. Austin, TX: Deans for Impact.
	Student activity does not itself imply that learning will take place. (Paul Ramsden, 2003) There are plenty of examples of students busily undertaking tasks but with little learning resulting. The key to effective learning is well-designed active learning. Graham Gibbs (1988, 9) argues that: It is not enough just to do, and neither is it enough just to think. Nor is it enough simply to do and think. Learning from experience must involve linking the doing and the thinking.	Ramsden, P. (2003) Learning to teach in higher education. London: RoutledgeFalmer (2nd edition). Gibbs, G. (1988) Learning by doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. London: Further Education Unit. https://thoughtsmostlyaboutlearning.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/learning-by-doing-graham-gibbs.pdf
	A key component of the visible learning strategy is giving students opportunities to assess their own progress. Students can use rubrics, portfolios and other methods to reflect on a specific learning goal and identify areas for improvement. Then, teachers can use this data to identify where their students might need more support or guidance.	Hattie, J. (2012) Visible Learning for Teachers. Maximizing Impact on Learning.

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Student Data-Tracking is evidence that guides teaching. We encourage teachers to conference and provide **explicit feedback** on weekly Big Writes; during the planning, discussion, writing and editing. Furthermore, we collect snapshot Cold Writes five times a year for formal data tracking. These are marked with the Australian Criterion Scale and placed in the student's personal data tracker. The Student Data Tracker (with the five Cold Write pieces of evidence) is passed on to the following year's teachers so that we can provide future educators with the explicit evidence required to support individual student learning targets.	Improving classroom practice, effective self-assessment, and reporting to the community involves schools collecting, analysing and presenting data. The ability to investigate, reflect on and make the most of available data is a core competency for everyone in schools – leaders, teachers and support staff. Effective use of data is a consistent attribute of high-performing systems (McKinsey & Company 2007), it is a critical foundation for high expectations, explicit teaching and feedback, and it provides teachers with information to guide and direct students as well as data to reflect on their own effectiveness (Grattan Institute 2015).	McKinsey & Company 2007, How the world's best-performing systems came out on top, report prepared by M Barber & M Mourshed. Grattan Institute 2015, Targeted teaching: How better use of data can improve student learning, report prepared by P Goss & J Hunter.
	Active learning is defined as any strategy "that involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing" (Bonwell and Eison 1991, 2). But, as Paul Ramsden (2003, 113)	Bonwell, C. and Eison, J. (1991) Active learning: creating excitement in the classroom (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1). Washington, DC: George Washington University.
	Visible learning strategies involve a teacher observing and analysing student data to understand individual learning needs, set goals and objectives for the students, effectively implement differentiated instruction, and engage students in their own learning. These practices allow teachers to craft more personalised learning experiences, which can keep students motivated while ultimately improving student performance	Hattie, J. (2012) Visible Learning for Teachers. Maximizing Impact on Learning.
	Effective feedback is often essential to acquiring new knowledge and skills. Good feedback is: Specific and clear; Focused on the task rather than the student; and Explanatory and focused on improvement rather than merely verifying performance.	Ericsson, K. A., Krampe, R. T., & Tesch Römer, C. (1993). The Role of Deliberate Practice in the Acquisition of Expert Performance. Psychological Review, 100(3), 363-406. Shute, V. J. (2008). Focus on Formative Feedback. Review of Educational Research, 78(1), 153-198. Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. Review of Educational Research, 77(1), 81-112.

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