Writing A-Z

Research Foundation & Logic Model

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MARCH, 2024

Educators search for high-quality research and evidence-based interventions to strengthen grant applications, to support comprehensive and targeted schools, or to implement new programming in their schools. Evidence requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) are designed to ensure that states, districts, and schools can identify programs, practices, products, and policies that work across various populations.

Educational programs document their evidence of design, effectiveness, and impact in order to be eligible for federal funding. While there is no singular authority that determine's a program's tier, the Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology provides standards to assess the varying levels of strength of research for education products.

The categories for ESSA Evidence are: strong (Tier 1) , moderate (Tier 2), and promising (Tier 3) evidence of effectiveness, or demonstrates a rationale to be effective (Tier 4).

This product meets the requirements for Tier 4:

✓ Includes a logic model based on research

✓ A study is planned and/or currently underway

⭐ A third-party research organization has reviewed the documentation for ESSA validation

When product designers leverage learning sciences to design their programs, educators can better target instruction, and students' skills soar. Through interviews with the product designers, an evaluation of their research-informed activities, and a planning of an efficacy study, this product meets the criteria for LXD Research's ESSA Tier 4 Evidence.

— Rachel Schechter, Ph.D., Founder of LXD Research

RESEARCH-BASED DESIGN
ESSA IV
LXD RESEARCH

RESEARCH-BASED DESIGN

LXD Research Recognition for Writing A-Z

Writing A-Z

This product has been rigorously evaluated and is hereby acknowledged for meeting the educational impact criteria of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), warranting a Level 4 for "**Demonstrates a Rationale**." This recognition is based on its research-based design to support student learning outcomes.

REVIEWED BY THE LXD RESEARCH EXPERT REVIEW PANEL

CERTIFIED BY:

DIGITAL PROMISE PRODUCT CERTIFICATION

March, 2024

Rachel Schechter, Ph.D.
Founder of LXD Research

DATE

Writing A-Z

Embrace the Future of K-5 Literacy for All

Discover the pinnacle of writing education with Writing A–Z!

Writing A-Z is a solution for writing instruction that addresses essential writing and grammar skills critical to literacy success.

- ✓ Explicit, easy-to-use lesson plans
- ✓ The ability to teach genre and the writing process together
- ✓ Engaging, interactive practice opportunities for students
- ✓ Our digital writing tool, WaLT
- ✓ Point-of-use, embedded professional development

Writing A-Z helps teachers establish a safe writing community, teach the writing process, promote self-regulation, and provide a regular time for students to write for various purposes and audiences.

By giving teachers the tools to engage students in guided practice, making their thinking visible, providing opportunities for actionable feedback, Writing A-Z allows teachers to meet their students' needs.

Writing A-Z provides multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate success and for teachers to regularly monitor student progress using data from interactive practice, rubric scores, and teacher observations.

Learning A-Z

Writing A-Z helps students improve their writing skills in various ways and provides suggestions on how students can be supported at every stage of the writing process.

Research-based Intentional Instruction

The instructional approach in Writing A–Z follows a gradual release model, guiding students from explicit instruction to **guided practice** and ultimately independent application of learned skills. This methodology is underpinned by research (Duke & Pearson, 2002). The approach aims to provide scaffolded support through **repetitive practice**, ensuring students develop a strong foundation in essential writing skills.

A Continuum of Foundational Skills

Writing A–Z, developed by teachers and grounded in evidence-based recommendations, delivers explicit and systematic writing instruction for kindergarten through grade 5. The program's scope and sequence align with national and state standards, presenting a continuum of writing and grammar skills. The curriculum incorporates scientifically based best practices, emphasizing teaching specific text genre characteristics and providing models for writing (Graham et al., 2015; Graham & Harris, 2019; Graham & Perin, 2007a).

Each unit integrates **genre and process writing,** progressing in complexity, and culminating in self-reflection and the choice of a piece for publication, following Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and evidence-based practices from SRSD (What Works Clearinghouse, 2018).

Research shows that teaching students the elements or characteristics of specific genres and analyzing models of good writing in those genres has been shown to positively affect writing quality (Graham & Harris, 2019).

The scaffolded approach used in Writing A–Z lessons gives teachers significant flexibility with core elements, which can be taught in whole-class instruction followed by small groups as needed.

"Writing A-Z is a great investment for your students. I needed something to supplement my writing instruction, so I tried the free trial of Writing A-Z and loved it! My students have become more efficient writers and have really begun to enjoy writing."

**Misty A
Classroom Teacher;
Fayette County PS;
West Virginia**

Varied Ongoing Assessments

Formative and summative assessments ensure teachers can respond promptly and effectively to students' needs. Writing A–Z not only offers multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate success, but it also provides authentic application and practice of writing and spelling skills they have acquired. Through interactive practice, rubric scores, and teacher observations, teachers can regularly monitor student progress. These activities serve as a valuable lens into students' phonemic awareness skills and spelling instructional needs, enhancing the overall assessment approach.

Providing students with specific evaluation criteria has shown moderately strong effects on revision and writing quality. Evaluation lessons should include genre-specific elements that do more than ask students to evaluate the organization of their piece (MacArthur, 2019).

Writing A–Z Assessment Components		
Ongoing Formative Assessment	**Implementation Frequency**	**Description**
Observation "Look Fors" Checklists (digital and print formats)	Daily (within the lesson plans)	Observation checklists, or "Look Fors," are a formative assessment embedded in each lesson. Observations help teachers provide actionable and timely feedback so that all students receive instruction that meets their needs.
Practice Interactivities (digital format only)	Daily (within the lesson plans)	Interactive online activities allow students to practice skills and teachers to monitor progress. Students watch a video that reviews skills, strategies, and concepts. Interactivities follow the video and require students to apply what they learned in the video. Results are available for teacher review and, like the "Look Fors," help teachers tailor activities based on student performance.
Module Assessments (digital and print formats)	Three times per genre unit, after the fifth lesson in Modules 2–4.	At the end of the fifth lesson in Modules 2–4, students will have completed a written piece that teachers can assess using a rubric. Module assessments assess students' knowledge of the skills taught within the module.
Unit Assessments (digital and print formats)	Three times per year per genre unit, after the completion of Module 5.	At the end of the fifth lesson in Module 5, students will have completed a written piece that teachers can assess using a rubric. Unit assessments assess students' knowledge of the skills taught within the genre unit.
Formal Summative Assessment	**Implementation Frequency**	**Description**
Pre- and Post-assessments (digital and print formats)	Three times per year, at the beginning and end of each genre unit.	Pre- and post-assessments evaluate (or measure) students' knowledge of core skills taught throughout the program and progress toward meeting grade-level standards.

Learning A-Z

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Writing A–Z provides opportunities to explore cultural diversity through **topics, discussion, and writing prompts**, allowing students to see their own cultures valued while appreciating those of others. Likewise, the modules and units are **flexible** and designed to be relevant to the experiences of a diverse student population.

Culturally responsive teaching recognizes the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The pedagogy is effective because it makes meaningful connections among diverse students' cultural identities, experiences, and perspectives.

The program provides **tips** demonstrating how teachers can present **inclusive** and **effective** lessons.

Tips in Writing A–Z lesson plans point out culturally responsive teaching opportunities, such as these tips for planning writing topics and sharing interesting information about students' cultures.

Writing A–Z instructional designers recognize that "both teaching and learning are naturally cultural, and difference is inherent to the human condition" (Gay, 2018, p. xxxi).

Instruction that makes learning relevant and accessible is "good teaching" that serves students and society.

Culturally Responsive Tip
Take cultural considerations of students in your class when brainstorming possible topics. Avoid making value judgments about aspects of cultures or regions.

Culturally Responsive Tip
Invite students to think of a topic related to their culture or heritage and share a fact they think the class would be interested in learning. Celebrate the differences and information shared to build respect for diversity and allow them to be experts on a topic.

"I love that Writing A-Z allows students to learn as they play. If a student struggles with an activity, it allows them to start over to learn it again (and earn more stars!). I love seeing the excitement in my students' eyes from earning stars after a new skill is accomplished. I especially like the Author's Purpose activity and how Writing A-Z provides differentiated instruction for students who struggle with how material was presented in class."
Cynthia J
Classroom Teacher; Dallas ISD; Texas

Read the entire Foundational Research Paper online!

Learning A-Z

Writing A–Z helps teachers establish a safe writing community and assures that even the youngest students see themselves as writers. Teachers lead K-1 students through all stages of the writing process. In planning, teachers demonstrate creating a simple graphic organizer using their hands. The top space is for ideas, which students draw and label, focusing on students' ideas and word function over part of speech. Phonetic spelling is encouraged, allowing students to apply phonics lessons. In drafting, students use the labels from their plan to form complete sentences, initially rehearsing orally and then writing. Lessons include scaffolds like sentence starters, frames, and teacher prompts.

Module Writing Example (First Draft)

The best snack is a carrot. It is crunchy.

Final Module Writing Example (Revised Draft)

The best snack is a carrot. It is crunchy. It is also sweet.

Teacher "cheat sheet" provides writing teachers can use for their modeling.
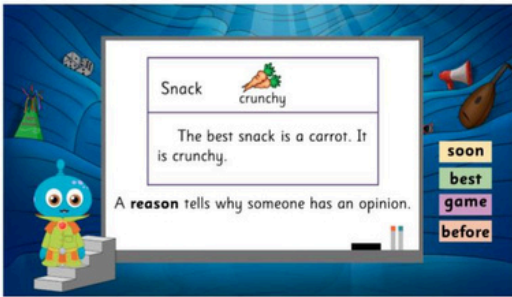
Optional instructional video

Grammar and sentence-level instruction are woven into drafting, revising, and editing lessons. With teacher support, students learn to use the steps in the writing process to strengthen their writing. Revising instruction centers around adding details and descriptive words to a piece by expanding sentences via prompts (E.g., What? Where? When? Why? How? What kind? Which one? How many?). Grade-appropriate writing checklists support students' evaluation of their writing. In first grade, checklists are genre-specific so that students become familiar with the different elements of each genre.

Writing A–Z provides authentic opportunities for students to practice and apply handwriting and spelling skills. The Handwriting Worksheet Creator is available to support teachers when they identify students who need extra handwriting practice.

Learning A-Z

Students can use a digital writing platform, WaLT (Writing and Learning Together), to go through all stages of the writing process. In addition to explicit lessons, teachers can assign instructional videos incorporating digital activities to check for understanding of the lesson. WaLT includes customizable graphic organizers, interactive checklists, robust editing tools, and texts students will use as evidence for their writing.

WaLT houses the resources needed to complete each lesson, including:
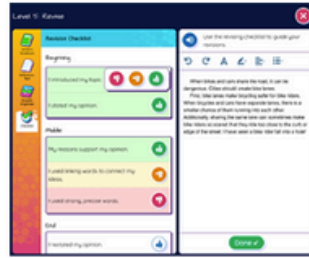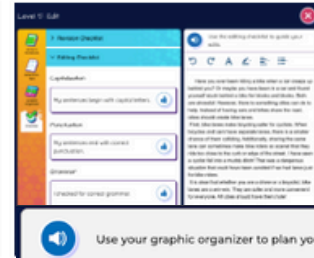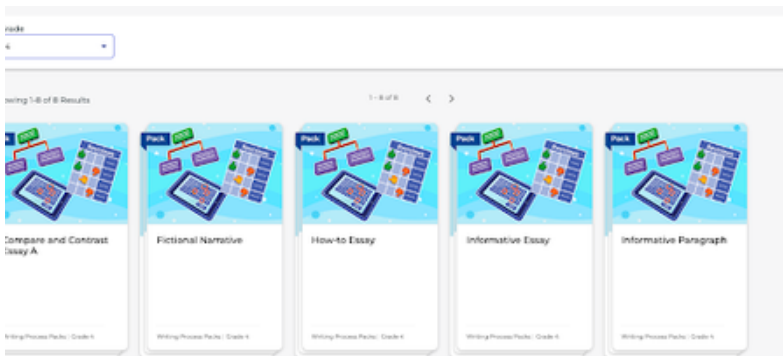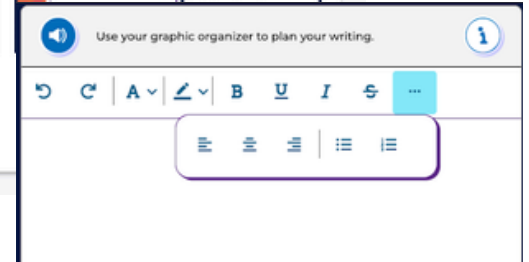
Graphic Organizers **Reference Texts** **Revising Checklists** **Editing Checklists**
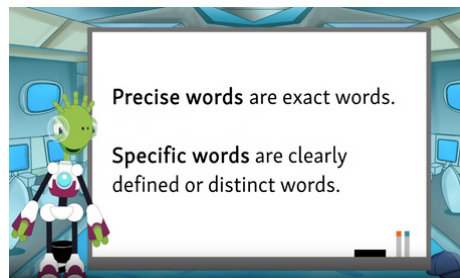
The resources display next to the writing space, making it easy for students to reference them while they write.

Writing Process Packs are designed for digital writing in content areas, in response to reading, or for writing outside the main writing lessons. Teachers can match a Writing Process Pack to a specific writing genre or task, and assign it to students. Each Writing Process pack includes a genre-specific graphic organizer and a revising and editing checklist.

Each writing lesson includes an instructional video teachers can assign as a review to absent students or students who would benefit from listening to a lesson more than once, or in place of the lesson's I Do: Teach section.

Precise words are exact words.

Specific words are clearly defined or distinct words.

In this example, the mascot, Quinton, is teaching students a revising strategy for finding overused words and replacing some with precise words.
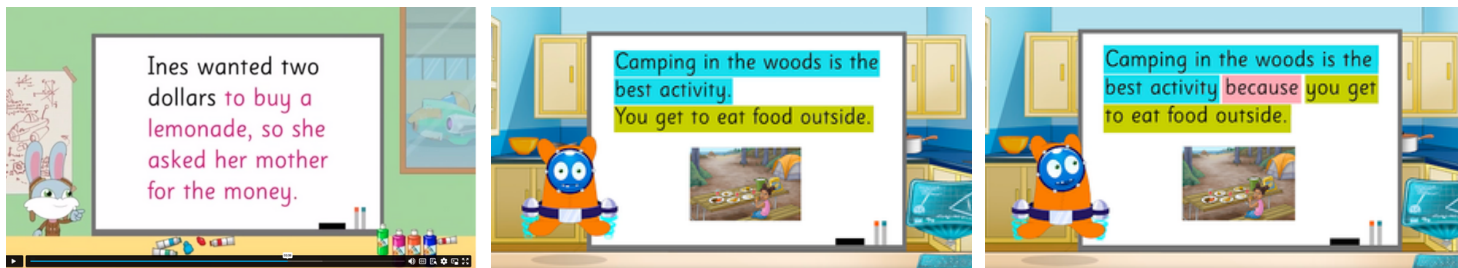
Learning A-Z

Writing A-Z teaches grammar at the sentence level, so students learn the function and impact grammar has on meaning. Students learn sentence structure and fluency by combining, rearranging, expanding, and deconstructing practice sentences. Through the gradual release of responsibility model, teachers provide instruction, examples, and collaborative practice manipulating sentences.
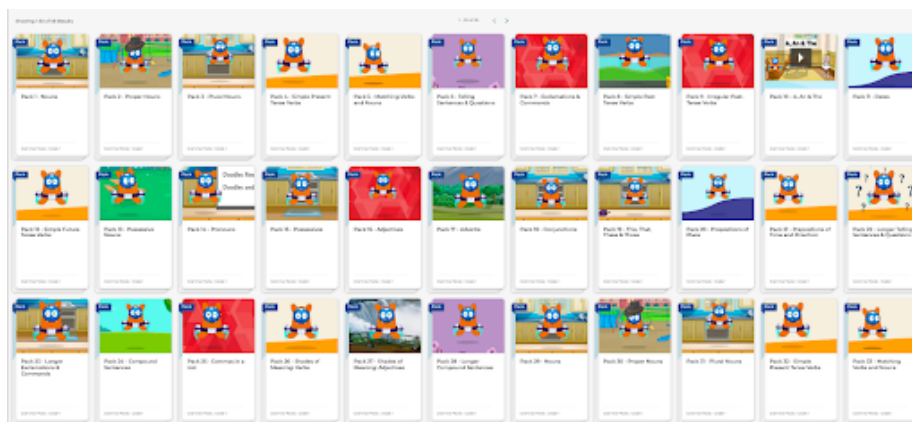
In addition to grammar and sentence-level instruction in the context of students' writing, teachers have access to the K–5 library of Grammar Skill Packs (instructional videos and practice activities). Based on students' grade level when rostered, these are automatically assigned to students and accessible in Kids A–Z. Teachers can change assign additional Grammar Skill Packs from any grade to any student.

Logic Model for Writing A-Z

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The insufficient focus on developing writing instruction in education is a significant problem. Despite the crucial link between writing and reading skills and their impact on academic and life success, there is a notable lack of emphasis on writing.

RESOURCES

Materials for students to complete the writing process (Digital or Printable)
- Lesson Plans with gradual release of responsibility
- Digital Writer's Notebook (WaLT Writing and Learning Together) for completing the writing process
- Texts to reference for gathering ideas and citing evidence
- Genre-specific graphic organizers
- Revision and editing checklists
- Grammar Packs
- Instructional grammar and writing videos for grades K 5

Professional development resources
- Tips for differentiation, SEL, Cultural Responsiveness, SRSD, and ELL
- Sample teacher think-aloud to make teacher's thinking visible
- Writing examples for modeling
- Scope and Sequence - Writing and Grammar
- Professional Learning Library
- Program Guide

Assessment Materials (Digital or Printable)
- Lesson-specific observation checklists
- Pre- and Post- assessments (summative)
- Daily interactive online activities, module, unit, and ongoing formative assessments, to monitor student progress and skill acquisition.

Assessment Reports
- Student assignment progress
- Skill progress

STRATEGIES & ACTIVITIES

Students
- Receive specific, explicit instruction in:
  - grammar at word and sentence level writing
  - linking and transitional words and phrases connect ideas within and between paragraphs in a longer writing
  - on the writing process, structures, syntax, and craft
- Apply strategies such as brainstorming ideas with peers and using semantic maps (graphic organizers) to organize ideas and strengthening writing using revising and editing checklists
- Leverage self-assessment tools across the writing process as a part of systematic instructional routines
- Engage in scaffolded, gradual release format instruction and participate in whole-group instruction followed by independent practice
- Track progress toward earning redeemable stars and badges from the My Stats area of Kids A–Z
- Receive corrective feedback during auto-recommended resources based on students' assessment performance, with nudges to avoid misconceptions

Educators
- Leverage the gradual release of responsibility model to ensure prepared student application
- Flexibly integrate activities to meet individual student and group needs
- Demonstrate live writing techniques (digitally and paper/pencil)
- Participate in on-demand Professional Development resources differentiated by topics/skills/strategy

Caregivers
- Receive access to their student's account to reinforce skills at home

OUTPUTS

Students
- Receive individualized practice activities to review and enrich learning
- Increased retainment of skills through interleaved (mixed up) and spaced practice
- Receive daily writing time, use of the writing process for a variety of purposes, and increase sentence construction skills and syntactic fluency through explicit instruction and practice within the context of student writing
- Use of the writing process for a variety of purposes
- Increased practice opportunities for sentence construction, handwriting, spelling, word-processing fluency
- Experience an engaged writing community

Educators
- Review skill level reports populated from practice interactivities, unit assessments, and interim assessments at individual and class levels to design relevant lessons
- Learn which question items students struggled with to tailor support and planning

Caregivers
- Build on students' progress by practicing skills at home

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

- Students develop higher-level thinking skills and strategies needed to compose writing using their understanding of organizational patterns, text structures, genre structures, word choice, and awareness of task, audience, and purpose, as well as spelling, syntax, and handwriting/keyboaring
- Students reflect on their development as writers through non-judgmental self-reflection exercises. Students consider different areas of growth and engage in reflective practices to enhance writing abilities.

LONG-TERM AND INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Writing A-Z improves students' writing skills, academic achievement, and overall literacy proficiency over time.
- **The integration of technology** supports students in completing the writing process digitally, including planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.
- Writing A-Z supports **diverse learners** by providing explicit instructional steps, systematic scope and sequence, and instructional routines to help address the needs of students with disabilities and English language learners.

ASSUMPTIONS

- Teachers will utilize the resources to enhance their understanding of evidence-based strategies.
- Teachers will encourage collaboration, mutual respect, and teamwork and provide opportunities for students to practice and develop social-emotional skills.

Learning Experience Design (LXD)
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Learning A-Z

Dear Education Leader,

The Learning A-Z team would like to express gratitude for your continued use of our reading materials. Knowing that many resource options are available to you, we are delighted that you have chosen Writing A-Z to support your educators and students.

We are excited to share our upcoming goal of assessing the efficacy of Writing A-Z and its impact on academic outcomes, specifically reading and writing abilities. We plan to conduct a research study on the program's effectiveness to achieve this. The findings of this study will help us understand the impact of Writing A-Z and improve it to better serve schools like yours.

We want to offer you the opportunity to participate in this study. Participants will receive free online access to the program, staff support and training, and feedback on your school's performance with suggestions for improvement.

Please get in touch to learn more details about the study and the terms of involvement. We hope you'll take advantage of this unique opportunity to help us shape the future of Writing A-Z. If you're interested or have questions, please contact us to arrange a meeting.

Thanks in advance for considering our invitation.

Sincerely,
Barbara Kruger, Product Manager
Writing A-Z

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Learning A-Z

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