

## RESEARCH AND STANDARDS

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Research on teaching writing to students with special needs and writing difficulties has shown that modified instructional strategies are critical to improving performance. The graphic organizer in this program was developed based on the research regarding teaching writing to students with special needs. Sousa states that a useful modification for students with writing disorders is to “encourage graphic organizers. Preorganization strategies such as the use of graphic organizers will help students get their main ideas in order before tackling the writing process” (2001).<sup>1</sup>

To meet the needs of students with special needs, the activity sheets in this book present one task per page. This approach helps students gain confidence in their writing abilities. As Sousa notes, “students with special needs are likely to be more successful if taught fewer concepts in more time” (2001).<sup>1</sup>

Waldron states that students who struggle “should never be given work above their current ability level. When students know they cannot be successful in a task, they refuse to try” (1992).<sup>2</sup> To allow all students to achieve success, regardless of their ability level, the activity pages in this program are presented at the simplest level possible. Building students’ confidence in their writing skills is as important as honing the skills. Teachers can modify questions in order to make them more challenging, if desired.

*Basic Paragraph Practice: Writing Step-By-Step* meets both state and national standards (including the Standards for the English Language Arts, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association) regarding writing instruction. As students complete the worksheets in this book, they will:

- learn an effective, visual strategy for writing coherent paragraphs.
- learn to clearly communicate their main idea and support it with appropriate details.
- write for the purpose of answering given questions.
- produce cohesive five-sentence paragraphs.

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<sup>1</sup> Sousa, D.A. (2001). *How the Special Needs Brain Learns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> Waldron, K.A. (1992). *Teaching Students With Learning Disabilities*. San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group, Inc.