



## RESEARCH AND STANDARDS

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Writing is a challenging cognitive process. Research has scientifically documented the expository writing needs of students with learning differences. Graham reports that the “writing difficulties of students with learning disabilities result from problems with basic text production skills, scant knowledge about writing, and difficulties with planning and revising text” (1991). Due to the variety of writing problems, “the treatment of these difficulties requires that teachers at all levels allocate instructional time for writing combined with a systematic program for teaching writing” (Mercer & Mercer, 2001).

Research on teaching students with writing difficulties has shown that modified instructional strategies are critical to improvements in performance. “Chief among the instructional recommendations is an emphasis on direct instruction of the expository text structures, together with the use of teaching methods and tools that highlight the organization of ideas into patterned relationships” (Englert et. al., 2007). Sousa states that one useful modification for students with writing disorders is to “encourage [the use of] 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).

Building students’ confidence in their writing skills is as important as honing the skill. Hallenbeck states that graphic organizers can “improve adolescents’ self-perception of themselves as empowered writers” (2002). Bruning concludes that “four clusters of conditions are proposed as keys to developing motivation: nurturing functional beliefs about writing, fostering engagement using authentic writing tasks, providing a supportive context for writing, and creating a positive emotional environment” (2000).

*Multi-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 activities in this book, they will:

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

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