



Mapping What Works in Writing

Thinking Maps Alignment to What Works Clearinghouse Evidence-based Practice Guides for Writing

Effective writing starts with effective thinking. Thinking Maps and *Write from the Beginning...and Beyond* help students organize their thinking for clearer writing and communication across the content areas.

Thinking Maps and *Write from the Beginning...and Beyond* are aligned with evidence-based practices for writing reviewed by [What Works Clearinghouse \(WWC\)](#) and included in their [Evidence-based Practice Guides](#). WWC's practice guides provide specific recommendations based on reviews of available research, experiences of practitioners, and the expert opinions of a panel of nationally recognized experts.

Practice Guide: Teaching Elementary Students to Be Effective Writers

Recommendation #2: Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes.

Thinking Maps is used across the writing process—including planning/pre-writing, writing and reflection—as well as for analyzing written materials to understand text structure and purpose. The Maps provide a structure to help students organize their thoughts prior to writing. Different Maps can be used to analyze or organize different kinds of texts; for example, a student may use a Flow Map to plot out a narrative story, a Multi-Flow Map to develop ideas for a cause-and-effect expository piece, or a Tree Map to outline supporting arguments for a persuasive piece. *Write from the Beginning...and Beyond* training shows teachers how to apply the Maps in the writing process and includes specific strategies for narrative, expository/informative, argumentative and response to text writing.

Recommendation #4: Create an Engaged Community of Writers

Thinking Maps is a whole-school “language for learning” that builds strong communities of thinkers, learners, and writers. Students use the Maps not only to organize their thinking but also to share their ideas with teachers and peers. Thinking Maps provides an effective tool to facilitate peer discussion, shared learning, and collaborative idea generation. As students gain proficiency with the Maps, they are able to transfer these skills across content areas and grade levels to become better writers and communicators.

Practice Guide: Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively

Recommendation #1: Explicitly Teach Appropriate Writing Strategies Using a Model-Practice-Reflect Instructional Cycle

Thinking Maps makes the writing process visible for students. Teachers can use the Maps to explain and model the writing process for students. As students create their own Maps, they learn how to organize and reflect on their thinking prior to writing. They can also use Maps to analyze and respond to their own writing and writing products from their peers. *Write from the Beginning...and Beyond* training shows teachers how the Maps are used throughout the writing process including Goal Setting, Planning, Drafting, and Evaluating. Teachers also learn specific strategies for narrative, expository/informative, argumentative and response to text writing.

Recommendation #2: Integrate Writing and Reading to Emphasize Key Writing Features

Thinking Maps provides a clear structure for analysis of text structures and features. Using the Maps to analyze texts improves reading comprehension as well as students' awareness of how texts are structured and how various text features (such as headings, images, and captions) relate to each other and add to the readability of the text. Careful and structured analysis of a variety of text types (such as Explanatory, Literary Non-Fiction, Procedural, or Argumentative/Persuasive) helps students translate the elements of effective writing into their own work. Using the same Maps for analysis of existing texts and organization of their own writing makes the translation more explicit and effective.

Contact us for more information!