

Exploring Second Grade Curriculum to Support Writing Growth and Development

By Jennifer Rios-Alers | Categories: Educator Spotlight

The study examined the effects of either the Being a Writer (BAW) or Language for Writing program on grade 2 students' writing skills and attitudes about writing. The study took place in two elementary schools in a Colorado school district. In the 2016–2017 school year, five grade 2 teachers in one elementary school instructed 72 students using Being a Writer while four grade 2 teachers in another elementary school instructed 67 students using Language for Writing. All the teachers in the study received professional development and coaching during the year. Student writing samples were collected in the fall and spring using prompts from the BAW Grade 2 Assessment Resource Book. In addition, a survey on writing attitudes was administered to students by their teachers in the fall and spring.

The authors report that students in the Being a Writer program demonstrated more growth in writing skills from fall to spring compared to students in the Language for Writing program. These skills were: ideas, organization, style/fluency, and language usage. The authors do not indicate if the differences over time were statistically significant.

Regarding student attitudes about writing, those who were instructed in Language for Writing demonstrated a decrease in positive attitudes about writing during the year (i.e., feeling that they were “good writers” and enjoying writing). Students who were instructed in Being a Writer demonstrated an increase in these attitudes during the same period. Again, the authors do not indicate if these differences were statistically significant.

¹ Both schools in the study had implemented Language for Writing school-wide during the 2012–2013 and 2014–2015 school years. Beginning with the 2015–2016 school year, one school piloted the Being a Writer program.

References

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) 114th Congress, S 1117.

U.S. Department of Education (2016). Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments. Washington, DC. Accessed at: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/guidanceusesinvestment.pdf>