Foundational Research

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Grammar and Language Instruction Supports Secondary Students to be Critical Readers and Writers

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INTRODUCTION: Grammar in secondary education

A generation of students now entering secondary school with unfinished learning in the conventions of language sets the stage for students to struggle to meet the reading and writing demands of secondary classrooms, college classrooms, and workplace demands. This fact is reflected in national reports indicating that secondary students in the U.S. are failing to meet grade-level reading and writing expectations on state and national exams (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022).

A deep understanding of grammar and language knowledge is critical for students to comprehend and create complex texts. However, the teaching of grammar and language has a long and complicated history in U.S. educational systems.

At one time, the study of grammar was considered essential to education and central to primary education (U.S. grades K-3), which often led to elementary school being referred to as grammar school (see Denham, 2020, and Dean, 2022 for abbreviated histories of the teaching of grammar). Towards the mid-twentieth century, beliefs about the usefulness and importance of grammar instruction began to shift with the publication of Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer's (1963) report that included a summation of Harris's (1962) research on the teaching of grammar and writing. Braddock et al., state, "…the study of English grammatical terminology has a negligible or even relatively harmful effect upon the correctness of children's writing in the early part of the five Secondary Schools" (p.83).

This often-cited line, based on the result of one study led to years of debate around the usefulness of teaching grammar. It has also unfortunately led to the decline of instructional time spent on grammar instruction that invites students to study, analyze, and discuss diverse language and linguistic practices, critical skills that provide students power when communicating at school, at work, and in the community (Ehrenworth & Vinton, 2005) and helps students to develop as proficient readers who write and writers who read.

Defining Grammar & Grammar Instruction

Grammar, in the simplest of terms, is the study of patterns in language and how those patterns work to communicate ideas. It can be seen as a set of rules that one must follow to be accepted as a knowledgeable member of literate societies (Hartwell, 1985). The Common Core State Standards reinforce the idea that students need to know and apply a set of standardized language rules but acknowledge that students must "…be able to choose words, syntax, and punctuation to express themselves and achieve particular functions and rhetorical effects" (CCSSO, 2010). This call for students to be able to make rhetorical decisions as writers creates opportunity for students to study and play with author's craft to become knowledgeable consumers and artful producers of language.

The study of grammar and language *in context* (i.e., in the context of students' own writing, in the context of a text under study) has been shown to be most effective in developing students' knowledge about language (Graham & Perrin, 2007; Weaver & Bush, 2008; Graham & Harris, 2017). Studying how an author uses language is an analytic task that should come after students have had the opportunity to engage in comprehension work. Analytic work contributes to students' development of metalanguage—the knowledge and vocabulary students use to describe and talk about language and grammatical features of a text—when teachers support students by helping them name and define the linguistic and grammatical features of texts (Myhill, Jones, & Watson, 2018; Deane, 2020). Vocabulary and language knowledge are gatekeepers to having power in literate societies (Delpit, 2006). Students who have not benefited from an education that helps them to build explicit knowledge about standardized grammar and language are often kept from participating in communities where standardized English is the accepted and expected norm.

Engaging students in inquiry about standardized rules of grammar through explicit study and discussion of authors' language and usage helps build students' vocabulary knowledge, a critical foundation for reading, as well as their understanding of the cultural norms embedded in the standard rules of grammar and usage – and why

authors make strategic decisions to break those rules. Reading, writing, and discussion that empowers students with the knowledge and skills to analyze and take up diverse linguistic practices, builds writers who can make purposeful decisions about using grammar and language for effect when writing (Ehrenworth & Vinton, 2005) as called for by grade-level standards. It also creates readers who understand the rhetorical moves an author makes as they work to communicate their ideas to their audience. This does not mean that students need to enter the classroom with specialized language knowledge, but it does mean that instruction needs to be structured to allow for students to enter into conversations that invite them to reflect on the language authors use in various texts. Empowering students to actively engage in language study provides them with the foundation to be curious consumers of language during class time as well as outside of assigned texts.

How does studying grammar and language help with reading?

Learning to read plays an important role in developing students' knowledge of grammar and language and drawing on grammar and language knowledge is an essential part of making meaning during reading (Dean, 2022). Understanding the science behind learning to read is central to instruction in literacy classrooms, especially when students are still working to develop fluency. Because of the importance of knowing how to read and process the ideas in a text, reading tends to take center stage in instruction. Unfortunately, if the curriculum has not been structured to prioritize the development of language knowledge alongside learning to read, reading instruction may leave little time for studying the linguistic choices an author makes and applying that language knowledge as students read additional texts and to students' own writing (Graham et al., 2018; Graham, 2020). The lack of opportunities to discuss authors' language use can impede students' abilities to fully comprehend a text understudy. Engaging students in analytic discussions of how an author uses language to achieve a purposeful effect is a critical component of deeply comprehending an author's ideas and building students' own toolkits for making language decisions in their own writing and when speaking.

This makes sense if we consider Scarborough's work in the 1990's and early aughts. Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001) represents the processes and knowledge that students need to weave together to become skilled readers. The two lager strands, Language Comprehension and Word Recognition, represent automatic processes and content knowledge coming together as readers work to make sense of text. The processes represented by the word recognition strand are the processes that are automatic and become unconscious for proficient readers – understanding how graphemes and phonemes work together to make words, decoding those words, and recognizing other words on sight. The Language Comprehension strand is more strategic—beginning with students activating the knowledge they bring with them to a text to make sense of the choices an author makes as a writer about content and structure, and then moving to deeper analysis of language, discussing the impact of the author's choices on the reader.

The expectation is that by the time students have entered middle school, they have begun to weave the work of the two larger strands together to form a solid (and complex) rope. The Language Comprehension strand is strengthened through students' interactions with rich texts, and this includes using writing to build knowledge about content, language, and genres - key threads in that strand. Language arts curriculum that blends reading, extended writing, and the study and discussion of language creates coherent instructional experiences for students that grow their knowledge around both content and craft.

It is important to note that this does not mean that by asking students to read more they will inherently develop knowledge about language and become critical readers and writers. Curriculum and instruction are most effective when students are invited to work on reading and writing together instead of either/or activities (i.e., today is a reading day or today is a writing day). Readers draw on knowledge that overlaps with writing knowledge and writers draw on knowledge that overlaps with reading knowledge (Shanahan, 2006). This is true for both content and process. Students draw on and build content knowledge as they work as readers to make sense of a text and they continue to draw on and build knowledge as they compose arguments and explanations. As readers, students enter into internal conversations with authors as they read – they set goals for their reading, work to build schema for how ideas unfold and are supported from paragraph to paragraph,

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question the author's ideas, and analyze the author's use of grammar and language—processes similar to what a student must engage in as they begin to plan, draft, and revise their own writing.

These shared processes include students drawing on knowledge about text structures, words, syntax, and usage as they make sense of written words and when they construct their own writing (Graham, 2020). Students are working on developing more sophisticated knowledge about language in high school. They work with increasingly complex texts and have opportunities to draft writing that is more sophisticated in both ideas and language use. Students should have the tools to make grammatical choices that help to develop students' writing voice, a feature of writing that gets lost when instruction singularly focuses on standardized rules for grammar and language (Ehrenworth & Vinton, 2005). Students should also be working to draw conclusions about how audience and purpose for writing can impact how "the rules" are applied.

What does research say about how grammar instruction supports developing writers?

Much like grammar and reading instruction should not compete for instructional time, grammar and writing instruction should not compete for instructional time. Effective English language arts instruction helps students make decisions both about what (the content) students say when they write and how (grammar, language, and punctuation) they say it (Dean, 2021). Classroom instruction that invites students to study, analyze, and play with language through writing adds to students' development of metalinguistic knowledge. Metalinguistic knowledge is knowledge about how language works. It includes the ability to reflect on and make conscious choices about how to manipulate language for effect with particular audiences. This type of knowledge is essential for effective communication and language learning, as it allows students to go beyond simply using language to communicate and develop understanding of the underlying rules and nuances for grammar and language use.

Using metalinguistic knowledge as a writer includes monitoring how words and sentences come together to represent an idea and making strategic word choices to appeal to specific audiences. As a reader, this is the internal process of taking stock of the ideas that you have just read and assessing how those ideas fit in to what you have read previously (Beck, McKeown, & Sandora, 2020). As a writer, this becomes self-monitoring of language use, which can be deepened through writing strategies such as sentence combining—a best practice in writing instruction. Developing metalinguistic knowledge also helps students to develop their writing voice, which is often found lacking in assessments of students' writing (Denham, 2020).

Research has shown that eleven evidence-based practices have a significant positive impact on student writing proficiency (Graham & Perrin, 2007). Among those practices are engaging students in a process approach to writing, teaching students writing strategies, asking students to write collaboratively, and engaging students in sentence combining activities. For these practices to be effective in helping students improve as writers, teachers need to include regular opportunities for students to engage in extended writing tasks, tasks that invite students to produce a page or more of writing, that builds students' knowledge about writing practices, engages students in conversations about how to use the practices to help them make strategical decisions about content, grammar, and language, and then provide students space to begin to make and reflect on decisions about how to approach a writing task.

A process approach to writing involves the routines and structures put in place in classrooms to facilitate extended writing (Dean, 2022). A process approach, sometimes used synonymously with a workshop approach, involves students in rounds of planning, drafting, giving and receiving feedback, revising, and editing writing that is being produced for real audiences and authentic purposes. When used with both struggling and average writers in both elementary and secondary schools, a process approach has a statistically significant effect on the improvement and quality of students' writing (Graham & Perrin, 2007; Graham & Harris, 2017). The effect is more pronounced when teachers have been trained in the process and utilizing high-quality instructional materials to facilitate the process. Interwoven within a process approach are other effective writing practices such as writing strategies and collaborative writing activities.

Writing strategies are central to a process approach to writing. They are the practices that writers engage in to plan, draft, revise, and edit their works. Strategies can be methods for generating ideas for writing such as brainstorming or drawing an image as the basis for a narrative, or they can be methods for organizing ideas such as creating an outline. Beyond that, proficient writers make decisions about which strategies to use as they approach a writing task, meaning that the strategies a writer engages with may look slightly different depending upon the decisions they make during each part of the writing process (Dean, 2022). Meta-analyses have shown that strategy instruction that leads to students making independent decisions about which strategies to engage with as they write has a positive and statistically significant effect on the quality of students writing (Graham & Perrin, 2007; Graham & Harris, 2017). This means that students who are taught writing strategies overtime and are then released to make decisions about how to approach writing tasks, including having agency to make decisions about language and structure, have higher quality writing than peers who have less agency in the writing process.

Collaboration, including collaborative writing, is pervasive throughout the recommended practices. Writing is a transactional process—writers develop and refine their ideas in conversation with texts, with peers, and with their audience, and not in silos devoid of talk. Practices such as collaborative writing and peer feedback provide students opportunities to share and apply what they know about language and writing to compositions drafted in collaboration with their peers. Students who have opportunities to write collaboratively work together to negotiate their understanding of the task and how to use language to communicate to their reader.

Studies on collaborative writing have shown a significant positive effect on students' writing when students move through the writing process with an intentionally paired peer. Students work together through each stage of the process, conversing about the artifacts of writing they generate at each stage, and learning about writing from each other. Yarrow and Topping (2001) found that when they compared the writing of students who were tasked to work through the writing process with a partner of comparable ability to students who were tasked to work through writing alone, the students working in conversational pairs showed more growth as writers over time than peers working alone. This may be because as peers work to discuss each other's writing, they gain a better understanding of the criteria for the assignment, the assignment itself, and how best to structure and use language to effectively communicate to a particular audience.

Asking students to write collaboratively is not enough. Embedded in effective collaborative writing opportunities are a set of routines that center student-to-student writing and talk and position students as the owners of the learning (Matsumura et al., 2022). These student-centered routines invite students to use writing to make their thinking visible to themselves before sharing their ideas with a partner, and then working with that partner to develop a more public artifact of their thinking. These routines have been shown to have a strong positive impact on both students' reading comprehension and the quality of students' writing (Graham & Hebert, 2011; Graham et al., 2018; Premo & Schunn, 2023).

Sentence combining is another collaborative activity and is a research-based best practice that builds students' understanding of the importance of language and connecting ideas. It invites students to try out new and interesting ways to build relationships among ideas for effect – to take risks as writers and then to be reflective about how changes in sentences impact a reader's understanding of the ideas either in a text under study or in students' own writings (Dean, 2022). This practice is effective for building students' language knowledge when students start with sentences from a rich text that they have been reading and discussing as a class. Students then work with the sentences to combine them to communicate an idea and then do it again to shift how the idea is expressed. Students then analyze and talk about how the different combinations effect how a reader understands the idea and why. They then apply that work to their own writing. Research on sentence combining has shown that when instruction includes opportunities for students to try out and then talk about grammatical structures in model texts, peers' texts, and in students' own writings, and how those structures work to create meaning and effect, that the quality of student writing, including the number of words produced and the ability of students to clearly communicate and support their ideas, improves (Myhill et al., 2013).

Grammar and Language instruction is critical for English Language Learners

English learning students are too often prevented from accessing complex texts and tasks that help them to engage with grade-level standards (Walqui et al., 2010) because of pervasive beliefs that students' lack of English proficiency makes engaging with complex tasks difficult and creates frustration that may turn students off from wanting to engage with instruction (Apodaca, Bernstein-Danis, & DeMartino, 2019). This includes engaging students in rich conversations about grammar and language. While the research discussed up to this point has mostly focused on native English-speaking students, the instructional practices are effective and critical for English language learner (ELL) students when instruction leverages appropriate scaffolds including utilizing students' native language to provide students access to cognitively demanding work around grammar, language, and writing.

Teaching grammar and language in the context of model texts and students' own writing is particularly critical for ELL students (Gilliland & Pella, 2017). The features of academic language are often the hardest for English learning students to acquire and transfer to their own writing. ELL students bring rich language knowledge to literacy classrooms. Instruction that begins with the language assets that ELL students bring with them to the classroom and engages students in the analysis and discussion of language using both students' native language and English, will help ELL students build the knowledge and skills necessary to begin to make critical decisions about English language use. Instruction that acknowledges and leverages the productive ways in which students move between using the language of ideas, the linguistic resources ELL students use to make sense of concepts and ideas, and the language of display, the evolving linguistic resources that students use in both talk and writing for particular audiences, has been shown to provide students with greater access to grade-level content while continuing to build their English language skills (Bunch, 2014).

The process of moving between students' native language and English when speaking and writing is a form of translanguaging—students using all their linguistic resources to make sense of the assigned task, make sense of ideas in texts, communicate those ideas to a partner or in a whole group, and to produce writing that expresses their own ideas (García & Kleyn, 2016; García & Kleifgen, 2020). Teachers can help position students' ability to translanguage as an asset and build on that asset by providing additional instruction that builds students' vocabulary knowledge around ELA content specific terms as well as creating access and providing space for students to discuss an author's language decisions in students' native language.

Research has found that translanguaging helps students to develop metalinguistic knowledge about English when they engage in student-centered instruction around complex, grade-level appropriate texts. Jiménez et al. (2015) found that when middle school students were asked to work together to first comprehend a text in English and then work to translate sentences from the text into their native language, it facilitated deep discussions both in English and Spanish about grammar, syntax, and semantics as students worked to understand sentence structure, vocabulary, verb tense, and figurative language. Students were able to draw on what they knew about grammar and language in their native language and use that knowledge as a lens for developing complex English language knowledge.

The Importance of High-Quality Instructional Materials to Support Grammar and Language Instruction

Despite what we know about the important role that grammar and language instruction plays in the development of every student's reading and writing skills, the study of grammar is often the component of literacy instruction that receives the least attention in classrooms. One reason for the absence of instruction on grammar and language is the lack of clarity about the importance of explicit grammar instruction on student achievement—the debate that was set off by Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Shoer's (1963) report decades ago. Teachers report they are often unsure of the value that teaching grammar and language brings to students, or they are uncomfortable with their own knowledge of grammar and language use (Hudson, 2016; Ward, Collet, & Eilers, 2022). It is also true that teachers entering the field now may not have benefited from a K-12 edu-

cation that included explicit grammar and language instruction because of the deemphasis on grammar and language study from the mid 1980's to the mid aughts (Denham, 2020).

Another reason for the absence of effective grammar and language instruction is the lack of high-quality instructional materials that support teachers to engage students in lessons on grammar and language. High quality instructional materials, often referred to as HQIM, are typically thought of as standards aligned instruction that follow a logical sequence, can be implemented by teachers with a range of teaching experience, and has material that is culturally relevant and supportive for a variety of students (EdReports, 2022). While reviews for HQIM in English language arts focus on the complexity of the texts students read, the cognitive demand of the tasks that students are asked to engage with, and the frequency with which students are asked to write, there is little emphasis placed on grammar and language instruction, meaning that it is possible for materials labeled as HQIM to gloss over or leave out explicit and effective grammar instruction. The deemphasis of language instruction when determining if materials are high-quality runs the risk of leaving teachers to find or create their own grammar instruction, which may or may not be accurate, effective, and grade-level appropriate.

When teachers perceive that curriculum materials are lacking in specific areas or they think the materials will be too challenging for students, they tend to turn to search engines to supplement (Wang et al., 2021) which may lead to the use of materials that address below grade-level or inaccurate content. In grammar instruction, this may lead to the use of what is often called "drill and kill" exercises that help students memorize terms and definitions, but do not help students build the capacity to apply grammar and language features to their own writing and to be critical consumers of the English language.

Research has been clear about the necessity and benefits of grammar and language instruction on students' development as readers and writers. Without explicit instruction that invites students to build on their own knowledge and develop new knowledge around grade-level appropriate grammar and language features, students will continue to struggle to be critical consumers and producers of language. One solution to increasing opportunities for students to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to develop critical linguistic practices is through utilizing high-quality instructional materials that support teachers to enact explicit grammar and language instruction through the use of models, extended opportunities to write, and student-centered routines that focus discussions on understanding grammar and language.

Grammar for Writing provides High-Quality Instructional Materials that Support both Teachers and Students

Instructional tools, such as *Grammar for Writing,* provide supportive pathways for teachers to build students' knowledge about grammar and develop as critical consumers and producers of language. Research has shown that the use of well-designed, coherent instructional materials that support teachers, even those unsure of their own knowledge about grammar and language, to use a combination of authentic models, explicit linguistic explanations, and instructional activities that support students to make decisions and apply what they learn to their own writing, has a statistically significant impact on secondary students writing performance (Myhill et al., 2012).

Grammar for Writing is high-quality instructional material that supports enactment of engaging grammar and language instruction. The materials support students to both develop deep understanding of grade-level appropriate grammar and language features and flexibly apply that knowledge to their own reading and writing through instruction that has been carefully aligned in two ways. First, each chapter and lesson are aligned to national standards in writing and language. Second, the chapters in each section (Composition, Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics) are internally aligned and provide teachers with suggestions of how they might pair, for example, Composition and Grammar chapters, to provide coherent language and writing instruction.

The beginning of the teacher edition of each grade-level aligned guide includes a "Standards and Correlations" chart that lists the grade-level standards addressed in Grammar for Writing and denotes which chap-

ters and lessons contribute to students developing the knowledge and skills to demonstrate mastery of each standard. The correlations assist teachers in making strategic and informed decisions about how they might align grammar and language work to the needs of students as students write for multiple purposes and in multiple genres. Aligning grammar and language instruction to what teachers notice about students' writing needs during formative assessment of students' writing has been shown to be critical for student uptake and application of the grammatical concepts under study (Graham & Perrin, 2007; Graham & Harris, 2017). This provided alignment removes some of the uncertainty that teachers might face as they work to make decisions about which grammar features to address and how to take students deeply into understanding particular grammar concepts.

In addition to providing instruction that builds students' mastery towards grade-level standards aligned knowledge and skills, *Grammar for Writing* can be implemented by teachers with a range of experiences teaching writing, grammar, and language. The guide is comprehensive in providing structures for writing workshops (a process approach to writing), including the strategies that students can use to produce writing, as well as explanations of the grammar and language features students study. The usability of Grammar for Writing means that teachers will be less likely to turn to online resources to supplement their grammar and language instruction. This includes instruction for students who are English language learners (ELL) and striving learners who may need additional scaffolds to access grade-level materials.

Each grade-level *Grammar for Writing* guide includes a "Differentiating Instruction" section that provides teachers with instructional scaffolds that provide access for both ELL students and striving learners to grade-level content. These scaffolds include helping students build vocabulary knowledge of content-based words, as well as ways to build on the linguistic resources that ELL students bring with them to the ELA classroom. The scaffolds help develop students' metalinguistic skills through pair and small group discussions, best practices for every student.

Grammar for Writing develops every student's metalinguistic knowledge in the work of each grammar and usage unit. These units begin with inviting students to read a sample of writing and discussing what they notice about the author's grammar and language use. From there, the work moves between explicit instruction – connecting students' thinking about how language is used in the sample piece to grade-level, standardized words and rules for particular grammatical concepts – and students having the opportunity to apply the grammatical features under discussion to their own writing, either independently or in collaboration with a peer. This process of comprehending, analyzing, discussing, and applying knowledge helps students to internalize the processes that proficient readers use to comprehend and process the language in texts. It also builds students' knowledge of the vocabulary around grammar, providing students with the power to engage in conversations as knowledgeable members of the English language arts community.

In addition, *Grammar for Writing* builds students' understanding of a variety of writing strategies that students can leverage as they engage in the writing process. In the Composition chapters, students are presented with multiple strategies for each step of the writing process and provided with models of what some of those strategies might look like in practice. As students engage with the writing workshops, they have the opportunity to engage with the strategies that students feel will best support them to develop each type of writing – the agency that research has found best supports students to improve their writing over time.

Collaboration, including collaborative writing, that includes student-centered routines is pervasive throughout *Grammar for Writing.* The composition chapters include multiple opportunities for students to share their writing with a partner, get feedback, and discuss revision. Instruction around peer feedback and revision helps students to develop a better understanding of audience and how the audience understands the ideas in students' writing.

The opportunities to collaborate continue in the Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics chapters. In addition to discussing their own writing, students are asked to collaboratively make sense of model texts, reading them to get the gist of an author's ideas, discussing what they understand about those ideas with a partner, and then

working to analyze a grammatical concept in the text that students can then revisit in their own writing. These chapters also include "Write What You Think" opportunities for students to write collaboratively with a partner, trying out the grammatical or linguistic features under study, and discussing the impact of the features use. The clarity of peers' language during these collaborative opportunities, as opposed to only receiving explanation in explicit academic language used by many teachers, is one factor that effects students' understanding of the impact of their content and language use on the reader (Cho & MacArthur, 2010).

Grammar for Writing provides students with multiple opportunities to both engage in models of sentence combining activities and apply sentence combining practices to their own writing. Once students have had the opportunity to play with language in a shared text, they should be invited to try out sentence combining in a piece of their own writing. Students then work to select one piece of writing in their portfolio to work on combining sentences to change how an idea is expressed. Students should then reflect on the change, including how combining sentences shifted grammar and language features, how those shifts change or enhance how the idea is understood, and whether the student thinks the shift in their writing is effective.

In addition to providing high-quality instructional materials that aid teachers in delivering effective grammar and writing instruction as well as scaffolds for diverse learners, *Grammar for Writing* helps strengthen students' reading skills, and particularly the Language Comprehension strand detailed in Scarborough's work. First, *Grammar for Writing* includes "Enriching Your Vocabulary" side bars that help students build knowledge around tier 2 vocabulary words. Tier 2 vocabulary words are what Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2013) refer to as "high utility for literate language users" (p.20). These high frequency words can be challenging for students to learn and use fluently because of their multiple meanings. Grammar for Writing provides students with multiple, in context exposure to tier 2 words – first in model texts, then through explicit explanation of what the word means in context, its origin, and other possible definitions. Teachers can take this work a step further by inviting students to use the tier 2 words in their writing. Vocabulary work in context builds students' word fluency and strengthens their language comprehension, helping students to become skilled readers as well as critical producers of language orally and in writing.

Second, in addition to building specific vocabulary knowledge, *Grammar for Writing* helps students develop metalinguistic knowledge through providing simple definitions, examples, and "Editing Tips" which provide insight into how the grammatical concept might be used. As mentioned previously, building students' ability to discuss language removes barriers that might prevent students from participating in communities that value standardized language knowledge and benefits both native English speakers and their ELL peers. Metalinguistic awareness includes developing explicit knowledge that allows students to discuss connections and differences among different examples of language usage and enhances students' reading and processing of complex texts (Gombert, 1992; QCA, 1998).

Conclusion

Many secondary students have struggled to meet the expectations of grade-level reading and writing standards when measured on state and national exams. An essential component of becoming a proficient and critical reader and writer is developing explicit knowledge of grammar and language, how grammar and language work to create meaning and effect in texts, and why authors make decisions to either follow or break grammar and language rules. However, instructional opportunities for students to engage in high-quality instructional materials that use research-based best practices to support the development of grade-level appropriate grammar and language knowledge are not consistent because of the ongoing debate surrounding the teaching of grammar and language.

But research has been clear, when grammar and language instruction occur in the context of rich and complex texts and with students' own writings and when that instruction marries students' opportunities to engage in discussion around the effect of grammar and language in context with explicit explanations, students' abilities to comprehend the ideas in complex texts improve and students' abilities to be artful producers of writing improve.

High-quality instructional materials, such as Grammar for Writing provide teachers with the tools and resources to create classrooms where students engage in rich conversations with each other about grammar and language and are able to apply their grammar and language knowledge to express themselves and communicate to broad audiences both inside and outside of the classroom.

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