EB ACADEMICS

**EB Programs + Curriculum:
Research and Evidence-Based**

October 2023

Research-based instructional strategies across the EB Academics Curriculum

Evidence-Based (EB) Academics creates and delivers content through unit plans and lesson activities that combine grade-level standards alignment with **researched-based instructional strategies** to increase student engagement and outcomes.

Below is a sampling of research-based instructional strategies used in our curriculum. (*This is not an exhaustive list*.)

- ✓ **Identifying similarities and differences –** Teachers can find compare/contrast opportunities for students in many of our resources, whether students are identifying similarities or differences within texts or across texts and genres. We even have a film analysis lesson for comparing and contrasting books with their film versions.

- ✓ **Summarizing and note-taking –** Within the lesson activities, students take guided notes during direct instruction. Several monthly unit plans include summarizing a narrative text using the SWBST approach, and our "Practice Writing Summaries" lesson utilizes a simple and effective 3-step summarizing method for nonfiction texts.

- ✓ **Reinforcing effort and providing recognition –** At EB, we understand that authentic writing opportunities and real audiences are key for instilling pride in students and motivating them to do their best. We help teachers provide memorable learning and sharing experiences with project-based learning projects, publishing parties, unique presentation formats, and more.

- ✓ **Homework and practice –** Our lessons include multiple opportunities for practice through exit tickets, written responses, and various projects.

- ✓ **Non-linguistic representations –** Our curriculum team and design team work together to include helpful and visually engaging images, photos, timelines, charts, etc. in our resources. Additionally, many of our projects and activities invite students to create their own artistic representations to show their thinking or support their understanding.

- ✓ **Cooperative learning –** Our Into, Through, Beyond lesson planning framework has cooperative learning built into each section, including students working in groups at different learning stages, competing against each other to increase engagement, and collaborating to complete writing assignments and projects. We also offer lessons/activities to help students discover *how* to work well together as a class and in groups.

- ✓ **Setting objectives and providing feedback –** In addition to incorporating intentional, clear objectives for teachers and students, our lessons include simple, effective rubrics to help teachers set clear expectations and provide timely, helpful feedback.

- ✓ **Generating and testing hypotheses –** Many of our lessons include prediction activities to engage students in the processes of formulating hypotheses, explaining their thinking, and testing their hypotheses. We also offer project-based lessons, like the Genius Hour project, that can allow students to generate and test hypotheses on topics that interest them. Additionally, our discussion activities often include "What if . . ." questions to help students dig deeper into analysis with hypothetical thinking.

✓ **Cues, questions, and advance organizers –** Our lessons include sample responses to help teachers cue students who need support or extra guidance, and the questions within our lessons and activities help teachers to gauge students' understanding before, during, and after lessons. Our curriculum team and design team also work together to create helpful advance organizers that assist teachers in building background knowledge and activating prior knowledge before lessons.

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement. Alexandria, VA: ASCD

The EB Academics Writing Program, founded in research

The EB Writing Program's foundational unit, Evidence-Based Writing Approach (The EBW Approach©), is modeled after the Toulmin Method, based on the work of philosopher and educator Stephen Toulmin. Inspired by Toulmin's argument method, our writing instruction teaches students a framework that is straightforward and approachable.

Laurel Nesbitt. (1994-2023). The Toulmin Method. The WAC Clearinghouse. Colorado State University. Available at https://wac.colostate.edu/repository/resources/writing/guides/
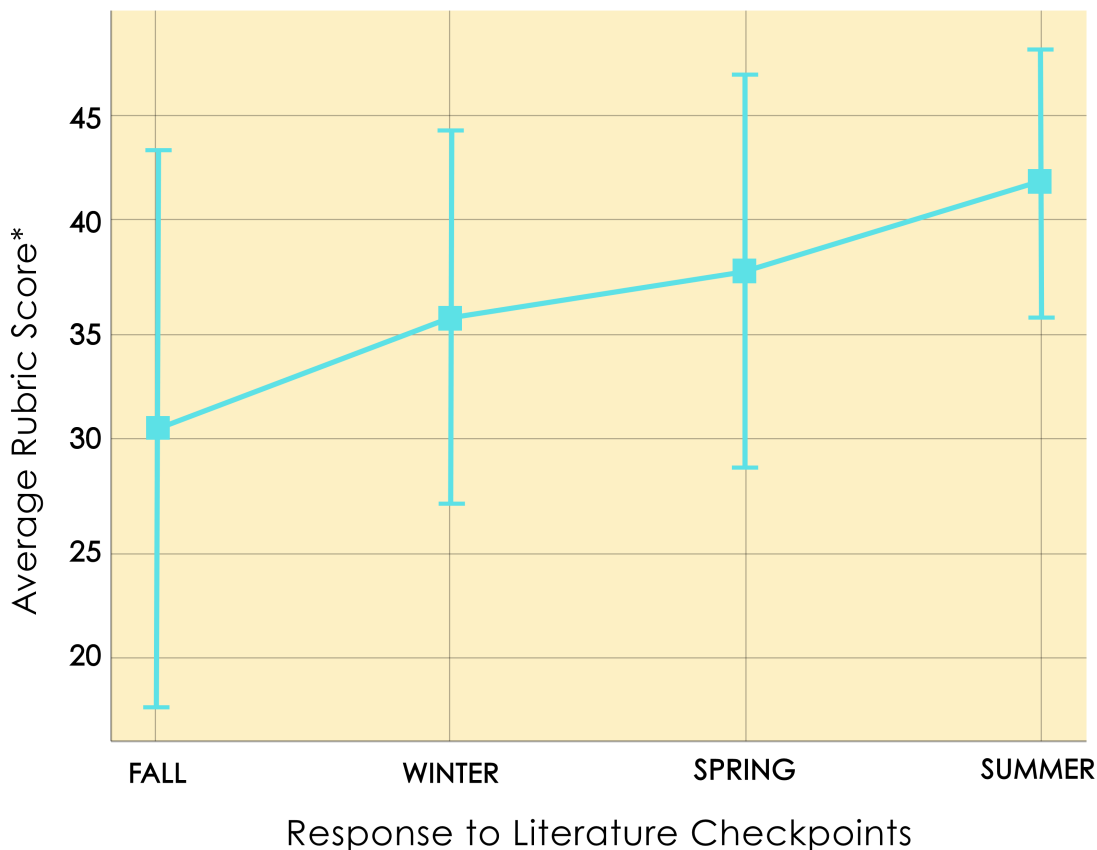
Evidence-Based Study of The EB Writing Program

The EB Writing Program underwent an independent study, conducted by a third-party researcher over the course of the 2022-2023 academic school year to collect evidence of the effectiveness of the program as defined by student growth in writing skills and performance scores.

Participants included 14 middle school teachers and 430 students. Each teacher collected essays and test scores from two separate classes. They submitted four individual collections of essays–from October 2022, January 2023, April 2023, and June 2023–with each collection being tracked at the individual student level.

Primary Finding:
Teachers who reported implementing the EB Writing Program in their classrooms with 75% or greater fidelity saw an average improvement of more than 50% in student writing performance over the course of the year.

Average Rubric Score*

Response to Literature Checkpoints

FALL   WINTER   SPRING   SUMMER

*All essays were graded using the EBW 50-point rubric

Science of Reading in Middle School

The five pillars of the Science of Reading are Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. In middle grades, reading instruction typically focuses on the vocabulary and comprehension components, or Language Comprehension (according to Scarborough's Reading Rope).*

Writing in Response to Literature

Responding to literature in writing is a research-based, proven approach to improving reading comprehension.** Through the EB Academics Writing Program, teachers are provided a robust unit for teaching students to respond to literature. Throughout the unit, students interact with texts in a variety of ways; they review examples, practice strategies, and use graphic organizers, which allow them to categorize and plan their ideas in order to formulate cohesive responses. In addition to the Writing Program, there are multiple resources within the EB Academics programs in which students experience a combination of explicit instruction, guided practice, collaborative/cooperative practice, and individual practice while engaging with texts.

In addition to The EB Writing Program, units and lessons within the EB Academics programs address the following elements of Language Comprehension.

- ✓ **Background Knowledge**

     To help students find success in their reading and learning, our materials give teachers the tools to teach explicit mini lessons before students read and also offer background-building activities and vocabulary to frontload information before reading. Many resources within the EB Academics programs also include anticipation activities that help to activate students' prior knowledge and prepare them to make connections with their reading.

- ✓ **Vocabulary**

     A yearlong vocabulary unit included in the EB Academics programs provides four sets of vocabulary lists of words that are frequently encountered across domains. It also includes direct, explicit instruction of words and multiple practice opportunities for students, such as notecards, example sentences, synonyms, antonyms, and personal associations, as well as assessments. Additionally, reading resources within the programs include vocabulary review and glossaries covering words in the provided texts. Teachers are encouraged to select words in other texts to further enhance students' interaction with new and unfamiliar words.

- ✓ **Language Structure**

     The most obvious feature of EB Academics that supports language structure learning is the yearlong Grammar Program, which provides lessons, activities, writing application opportunities, and assessments for multiple grade levels, in addition to a support library for more basic skills. From words and phrases to sentences, the program covers a wide variety of syntax and semantics learning. Additionally, lessons and activities that guide students through the process of analyzing an author's word choice, including considerations such as connotation, irony, and figurative language, are offered within the EB Academics programs.

✓ **Verbal Reasoning**

The lessons and activities provided within the EB Academics programs offer a strong focus on reading comprehension that includes not only basic comprehension of a text's main ideas and details, but an understanding of a text's nuances, themes, and implications. While some resources guide students through basic skills such as identifying the main idea and summarizing information, others go beneath the surface to cultivate critical-thinking skills, empowering students to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and draw connections within and beyond the text.

✓ **Literacy Knowledge**

Resources – including short stories, novels, graphic novels, newspaper and magazine articles, poems, and even podcast episodes – that are focused on a variety of genres and text types are found within the EB Academics programs. There are also lessons and activities focused on fiction and nonfiction reading comprehension and on text structures. Teachers can use our instructions and resources to help students not only grasp the literal content but also explore the layers of meaning embedded in their reading, across genres. We believe that high expectations combined with practical supports are the keys to fostering comprehension and a deeper appreciation for reading.

*Scarborough, H. S. (2001). Connecting early language and literacy to later reading (dis)abilities: Evidence, theory, and practice. In S. Neuman & D. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook for research in early literacy* (pp. 97–110). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

**Graham, S., and Hebert, M. A. (2010). Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading. A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.