EVIDENCE

Writeiq Research Basis

The evidence and principles behind the Writeiq assessment framework.

Why Criterion-Based Over Holistic

Holistic marking (assigning a single overall score) has been the default in large-scale writing assessment for decades. It is efficient but provides no diagnostic information. A student who scores 3/6 holistically has no way of knowing whether their weakness is sentence structure, paragraphing, or ideas development.

Writeiq uses analytic (criterion-referenced) marking because the research is clear: criterion-level feedback produces greater learning gains than holistic scores. Sadler (1989) established that students need three things to improve: a clear goal, evidence of their current position, and specific guidance on how to close the gap. A single score provides none of these. Criterion scores provide all three.

The cost of analytic marking has historically been time. Writeiq eliminates that cost while retaining the diagnostic specificity that makes criterion-based assessment valuable.

The 13 Criteria

Writeiq assesses writing across 9 to 13 criteria depending on the writing type. The criteria were developed through analysis of the Victorian Curriculum 2.0 English standards, the Australian Curriculum v9.0 English learning area, and the IB MYP Language and Literature assessment criteria. They are:

- **Audience Awareness** — engagement with reader, register, voice, and purpose
- **Ideas and Development** — depth of content, elaboration, and reasoning
- **Text Structure** — macro-organisation: introduction, body, conclusion, logical sequencing
- **Cohesion** — paragraph-to-paragraph flow, transitions, connective logic
- **Paragraphing** — paragraph boundary decisions, topic sentences, internal coherence
- **Sentence Structure** — syntactic variety, sentence length variation, grammatical accuracy
- **Punctuation** — conventional accuracy, adventurous punctuation, dialogue conventions
- **Spelling** — accuracy relative to word difficulty, patterned vs random errors
- **Vocabulary** — word choice, precision, sophistication relative to year level

Additional criteria for narrative writing include Literary Devices and Character and Setting. Persuasive writing includes Persuasive Devices. Primary writing types adapt these criteria with age-appropriate descriptors.

The Gate System

Writeiq applies a system of cross-criterion validation gates that enforce logical consistency between scores. This is based on the construct validity principle: if a student's spelling score exceeds their sentence structure score by a large margin, something is likely wrong with one of the scores.

For example, GATE-H checks whether Spelling has been inflated relative to Sentence Structure. GATE-A1 checks whether Vocabulary has been inflated relative to Audience Awareness. GATE-I enforces a ceiling on Sentence Structure when Punctuation is zero (a student cannot be constructing complex sentences without any punctuation).

These gates are based on the same cross-checks experienced markers apply intuitively. The gate system codifies expert marking practice into reproducible rules.

Alignment to Curriculum Standards

Each Writeiq band (Emerging, Developing, Consolidating, Extending) is mapped to the achievement standards of 9 curriculum frameworks across Years 3–12. The band boundaries were calibrated by aligning the IWAF (Integrated Writing Assessment Framework) rubric descriptors to the published achievement standards and scored student exemplars from VCAA, ACARA, and the IB.

This mapping allows teachers to use Writeiq scores as evidence for curriculum reporting. A student scoring in the Consolidating band in Year 8 is performing at the expected standard for Victorian Curriculum Level 8 English.

The Teach Next Model

Writeiq's Teach Next feature identifies the highest-leverage criterion to teach next based on class-level data. This is grounded in Hattie's (2009) finding that formative evaluation (effect size 0.90) and feedback (effect size 0.73) are among the most impactful teaching strategies. Writeiq transforms assessment data into an immediate, actionable teaching priority, with a lesson plan attached, reducing the gap between assessment and instruction.

References

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement.* Routledge.

Sadler, D.R. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. *Instructional Science, 18,* 119–144.

VCAA. *Victorian Curriculum F-10: English.* Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

ACARA. *Australian Curriculum v9.0: English.* Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

IBO. *MYP Language and Literature Guide.* International Baccalaureate Organisation.