

Writer's Workshop Information

Writing Workshop is a method of writing instruction that developed from the early work of Donald Graves, Donald Murray, and other teacher/researchers who found that coaching students to write for a variety of audiences and purposes was more effective than traditional writing instruction or worksheet oriented learning. This approach has been popularized and developed by Lucy Calkins (and others) in the field today.

Elements of A Writing Workshop

Lots of writing

- Students write for the bulk of the writing period for about 20 minutes of writing time. This time does not include worksheets of any kind as students are in the act of composing their writing, like actual writers do when they sit down to write something.

Teaching

- Daily teaching structures minilesson, conferring, and share time.
Minilesson (about 10 minutes)
Work time and Conferring (about 20 minutes)
Share (about 7 minutes).
- While students are writing the teacher holds individual (or group) writing conferences with students. A writing conference is a teaching conversation in which the teacher sees what a student is doing and then teaches him/her something more about writing. Teaching might include: getting an idea, focus or clarify, developing and elaborating, improving spelling or sentence structure, writing longer sentences, writing stronger endings or conclusions, etc.

Topic Choice and the Writing Process

- Almost 100% of the time in a writing workshop, students select their own topics to write about.
- Teachers will teach students how to go through a process of writing including pre - draft writing, writing a draft, revising, editing, and publishing. (In the primary grades, the writing process begins with draft writing).

Frequent Feedback

- Teachers give students specific and usable feedback on their writing as they write. This may come during a share time or during a writing conference. This feedback is designed to be specific enough so that the student knows what he did well and/or how she might continue to work on this piece of writing.

Learning from Authors

- In a writing workshop, teachers show students how to learn from authors. Books used in read aloud are brought into the workshop so students can "try on" some of the things they see other writer's doing. One way young writers learn to write is by imitating some of what they hear and see in published books.

High Expectations and an Environment of Safety

- Students use transitional spelling, stretching out words to write the sounds they hear. (Transitional spelling should improve throughout the year and students learn to spell words through interactive writing and word study).
- Students select most of their own topics (within the unit under study). Story starters and writing prompts are rarely if ever used during a workshop time. (Prompts are used as a way to assess what has been learned, but not during instructional time).

- Students often decide where or how to revise their writing. They follow the work of the minilessons, but determine what to revise and sometimes exactly how they will go about the work of revision.

Assessment and Self - Assessment

- Students are offered feedback throughout the writing workshop, especially during writing conferences. This assessment helps the writer because it comes when the writer is still working on the piece and can incorporate what was learned.
- Students also reread their own writing and ask, “What have I done well as a writer and what might I continue to work on? This rereading may be accompanied by a checklist so that student writers can see specifically what they might do next in order to improve their writing.”

A Guide to Common Core Writing Workshop (Primary Grades)

This is the nuts and bolts book – the essentials of the writing workshop.

Chapter 1 A New Mission for Schools and Educators

An overview of the series

Chapter 2 What do the CCSS Say about Writing/What Does this Mean?

The CCSS and narrative, opinion/argument, informational Texts

The writing process described in the standards

Chapter 3 The Pathway Along Which Writers Progress **

A learning pathway along which young writers develop

Chapter 4 Necessities of Writing Instruction **

“The Bill of Rights” that guides a teacher’s work - what all kids deserve in writing instruction.

Chapter 5 Provisioning the Writing Workshop **

- Room arrangement
- The meeting area
- Work areas and Materials - Writing Folders and other materials needed.

Chapter 6 Management Systems **

Managing the classroom during minilessons, transitions, & conferences. Also, three common management difficulties and how to solve these problems.

Chapter 7 - Inside the Minilesson**

The architecture of a minilesson and about the student’s role during minilessons

- Connection
- Teaching
- Active Engagement
- Link

Chapter 8 - Differentiated Feedback**

The architecture of a conference

- Research
- Decide
- Teach
- Link

Chapter 9 - Supporting English Language Learners

Support in early stages and later stages of Learning English

Chapter 10 – Building Your Own Units of Study

A Guide to Common Core Writing Workshop (Intermediate Grades)

This is the nuts and bolts book – the essentials of the writing workshop.

Chapter 1 A New Mission for Schools and Educators

An overview of the series

Chapter 2 What do the CCSS Say about Writing/What Does this Mean?

The CCSS and narrative, opinion/argument, informational Texts

The writing process described in the standards

Chapter 3 The Essentials of Writing Instruction **

“The Bill of Rights” that guides a teacher’s work - what all kids deserve in writing instruction.

Chapter 4 Upper Elementary Grade Writers and Process **

Different approaches to teaching writing/How an upper grade student uses the writing process

Chapter 5 Provisioning the Writing Workshop **

- Room arrangement
- Materials – Writer’s notebooks, folders, and exemplar texts

Chapter 6 Management Systems **

Managing the classroom during minilessons, transitions, & conferences. Also, three common management difficulties and how to solve these problems.

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