

## pre-college national mission programs

### BEST PRACTICE IN TEACHING WRITING

Increase	Decrease
<p>Student ownership and responsibility by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Helping students choose their own topics &amp; goals</li> <li>● Using brief teacher-student conferences</li> <li>● Teaching students to review their own progress</li> </ul>	<p>Teacher control of decision-making by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher deciding on all writing topics</li> <li>● Suggestions for improvement dictated by teacher</li> <li>● Learning objectives determined by teacher alone</li> <li>● instruction given as whole-class activity</li> </ul>
<p>Class time spent on writing whole, original pieces, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Establishing real purposes for writing, and students' involvement in the task</li> <li>● Instruction in, and support for, all stages of writing process</li> <li>● Pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing</li> </ul>	<p>Time spent on isolated drills on "subskills" of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, paragraphing, penmanship, etc.</p>
<p>Teacher modeling writing -- drafting, revising, sharing--as a fellow author, and as demonstrator of processes</p>	<p>Teacher talks about writing but never writes or shares own work</p>
<p>Learning of grammar and mechanics in context, at the editing stage, and as items are needed</p>	<p>Isolated grammar lessons, given in order determined by textbook, before writing is begun</p>
<p>Writing, for real audiences, publishing for the class and for wider communities</p>	<p>Assignments read only by teacher</p>
<p>Making the classroom a supportive setting for shared learning, using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Active exchange and valuing of students' ideas</li> <li>● Collaborative small group work</li> <li>● Conferences and peer critiquing that give responsibility for improvement to authors</li> </ul>	<p>Devaluation of students' ideas through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students viewed as lacking knowledge and language abilities</li> <li>● Sense of class as competing individuals</li> <li>● Work with fellow students viewed as cheating, disruptive</li> </ul>
<p>Writing across the curriculum as a tool for learning</p>	<p>Writing taught only during "language arts" period, i.e., infrequently</p>
<p>Constructive and efficient evaluation that involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Brief informal oral responses as students work</li> <li>● Thorough grading of just a few student-selected, polished pieces</li> <li>● Focus on a few errors at a time</li> <li>● Cumulative view of growth and self-evaluation</li> <li>● Encouragement of risk-taking and honest expression</li> </ul>	<p>Evaluation as negative burden for teacher and student by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Marking all papers heavily for all errors, making teacher a bottleneck</li> <li>● Teacher editing paper, and only after completed, rather than student making improvements</li> <li>● Grading seen as punitive, focused on errors, not growth</li> </ul>



## Return to the Big Picture

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