Graduate Research Papers   Graduate College

2007

Instructional recommendations for the teaching of writing

Bridgette Wagoner
University of Northern Iowa

Instructional recommendations for the teaching of writing

Find Additional Related Research in UNI ScholarWorks
To find related research in UNI ScholarWorks, go to the collection of Educational Psychology and Foundations Graduate Research Papers written by students in the Department of Educational Psychology and Foundations, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, at the University of Northern Iowa.

Abstract
Clearly, writing is an essential life, work, and educational skill, and far too many students without essential writing skills are receiving high school diplomas. These realities put many recent high school graduates at a disadvantage in personal, professional, and educational arenas. Writing skills are simply too important to be ignored. This reality begs an important question: Which instructional approaches are likely to lead to improved student writing? For the purposes of this paper, research will center mainly on controlled studies, though much insight also stands to be gained from studies of what writers and teachers of writing have to say about their own processes and experiences.

Running Head: WRITING RECOMMENDATIONS

Instructional Recommendations for the Teaching of Writing

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

Bridgette Wagoner

University of Northern Iowa

September 2007

Table of Contents

Chapter 6:

Chapter One

Statement of the Problem

Though few people question the belief that good writing skills are essential for success in both post-secondary education and today's workforce, recent high school graduates are not adequately prepared to meet the writing demands they encounter in either setting after they graduate. This becomes clear after a critical look at how students perform on a variety of writing tasks.

Standardized test data are often looked to as obvious first indicators for academic achievement of any kind. Looking to standardized test scores to address current student performance in writing is difficult, though. Tests such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED) measure Usage and Mechanics and Vocabulary, which may be related to quality writing, but there is not one score to which a researcher can look to define student performance in writing, nor can one assume that a good score in these elements will translate to quality writing.

Similarly, the American College Testing (ACT) Assessment has limited relevance, as students who take it receive an overall subscore for the English section of the exam without any information specifically relevant to writing ability; there is no subscore for the questions that ask students to revise writing. A score for this section might invite conclusions about some aspects of writing ability, but the ability to revise is just one component of writing. ACT has added a Writing component to its exam, but it is still optional and not commonly required by post-secondary institutions, so not every student taking the ACT takes the writing exam. In fact, many students opt out of the optional writing component.

Furthermore, the ACT is not universally administered to students in Iowa, so results can not provide an accurate picture of the status of writing achievement. Since 2000 approximately 66-69% of Iowa students have taken the ACT (Condition of Education, 2005, p. 158), and it can be assumed that these students are those with postsecondary intentions. This population is likely to be better prepared than others. With these limitations in mind, it is still important to use the limited available data to shed light on the status of adolescent writing achievement in the nation and the state, and to use this data to think critically about the current state of adolescent writing instruction.

At the national level, ACT provides the following interpretation of 2005 test data: "nearly one-third of high school graduates are not ready for college-level composition courses" (as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 7). Interpretations of this same data by the Achieve Corporation (2005) support those presented by ACT, showing that "college instructors estimate that 50% of high school graduates are not prepared for college-level writing" (as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 8). Whether the number is one third or one half, there can be no logical reason to believe that all college bound students are leaving high school well-prepared to meet the writing demands they will face as they continue their education, whether in four year colleges and universities or in community colleges across the nation. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2003), "at least a quarter of new community college students enroll in remedial writing courses" (as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 9). Evidently, too many high school graduates nationally do not have the writing skills necessary for success in postsecondary education.

One reason for this perceived lack of writing skill may be related to differences in perceptions about writing at the secondary and post secondary levels. According to ACT's National Curriculum Survey results, there are differences among high school and postsecondary teachers' values related to different aspects of writing. Educators at the postsecondary level placed more value on mechanics in writing than did high school teachers. Conversely, secondary teachers ranked topic and idea development in writing at the top of their list of important writing skills, while postsecondary educators placed those elements lower ("Aligning," 2006). While this difference in perceived importance does not determine which writing skills truly are most important, it does clearly illustrate the gap between adolescent writing instruction and postsecondary entrance expectations.

The College Board provides additional data on the writing skills of American high school students. Using the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), score analysts report data on a variety of academic areas. The addition of a writing section of the test has for the first time allowed these statisticians to provide data gathered from student writing samples. Students completing the writing section of the SAT are asked "to respond to a point of view on an issue through an original first draft format and support a position with reasoning and examples taken from readings, studies, experience, or observations" (College Board, 2006, para. 15). Two readers each score the essays, with a third reader resolving any discrepancies. Each reader provides a score between 1 and 6; the two scores are added together to generate a final score out of 12 (College Board, 2006).

Analysis of data from the graduating class of 2006 showed that the average essay score was 7.2 out of 12. Student test takers produced a variety of structures and forms—fewer than 8% produced a typical five-paragraph essay, while 53% used academic

examples, and 52% used personal experience for supporting evidence (College Board, 2006). While the SAT data is not particularly alarming, there is certainly room for improvement in writing scores.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the Nation's Report Card, is the only national, ongoing assessment of what American students know and can do in a variety of school subjects. The most recent NAEP results for writing are from 2002, and they shed some light on the proficiency of American student writers. Comparing tests between 1998 and 2002, average scale scores for students in grades four and eight increased, but there was no statistically significant change in the scores for twelfth graders during that time. There was also positive movement among levels of basic, proficient, and advanced. However, only 2% of students at grades four, eight, and twelve earned scores that placed them in the advanced category for writing (*The Nation's Report Card*, 1998). These results clearly show that, while progress has been made in grades four and eight, there is still a considerable need for improved student writing performance at all grades.

When asked, recent graduates themselves feel inadequately prepared to face the requirements of writing in college and in the workforce: "As many as two in five recent high school graduates say that there are gaps between the education they received in high school and the overall skills, abilities, and work habits expected of them today in college and the work force" (Rising, 2005, p. 2). Many point to a lack of experience with the types of writing expected of them. Amount of experience writing is a significant variable affecting writing improvement. However, fewer than 50% of these graduates said that they "were asked to do a great deal of writing in high school" (Rising, 2005, p. 5). In fact,

the students who reported doing a significant amount of writing in high school, specifically longer assignments such as research papers and term papers, felt much better prepared; 79% of those students felt well-prepared (Rising, 2005).

College instructors are probably the group most critical of the writing skills of recent high school graduates. They estimate that half of their students are not adequately prepared to complete college level writing. They also report spending significant amounts of time covering material they feel should have been covered in high school. When asked to choose one or two areas for better high school instruction, the two most likely answers were writing quality (37%) and mathematics (34%). Overall, 62% of the college level instructors surveyed are dissatisfied with the job public schools are doing with writing quality (Rising, 2005).

Unfortunately, many employers also believe recent high school graduates to be largely unprepared to face the writing demands of today's workplace. According to data from The Institute for Tomorrow's Workforce, "The employers estimate that large segments [of recent high school graduates] are unprepared in specific subjects" (Rising, 2005, p. 6). Specifically, they estimate that "38% are inadequately prepared for the quality of writing that is expected" (Rising, 2005, p. 6). The recent graduates surveyed agreed with this assessment, noting gaps in their preparation for the workforce: "38% feel that there are some gaps in the quality of writing that is expected [of them in the workforce] (10% large gaps)" (Rising, 2005, p. 5). The National Commission on Writing (2003) found that "about 30% of government and private sector jobs require on-the-job training in basic writing skills. Private companies spend an estimated $3.1 billion annually on remediation, and state governments spend an estimated $221 million

annually" (as cited in Graham and Perin, 2007, p. 9). With so many employees and their employers declaring that high school graduates are unprepared for the demands of writing in the workplace, the existence of a problem is undeniable.

Statement of the Research Question

Clearly, writing is an essential life, work, and educational skill, and far too many students without essential writing skills are receiving high school diplomas. These realities put many recent high school graduates at a disadvantage in personal, professional, and educational arenas. Writing skills are simply too important to be ignored. This reality begs an important question: Which instructional approaches are likely to lead to improved student writing? For the purposes of this paper, research will center mainly on controlled studies, though much insight also stands to be gained from studies of what writers and teachers of writing have to say about their own processes and experiences.

Significance of the Problem

Because writing is central to the lives of today's students, the widespread lack of adequate writing skills is a significant problem. Adolescent lives are filled with a variety of writing tasks. On a regular basis, they write to form social networks, engage in civil discourse, grow personally and spiritually, reflect on experiences, communicate personally and professionally, build relationships, and engage in aesthetic experiences (NCTE, 2004). It stands to reason that graduates without adequate writing skills are at a disadvantage in many aspects of their lives.

In spite of this reality, some educators mistakenly believe that solid writing skills are only necessary for those students who are college-bound. However, 2004 data from

the American Diploma Project and 2005 ACT data show that "the knowledge and skills required for higher education and for employment are now considered equivalent" (as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 8). According to the National Commission on Writing (2005), "the majority of both public and private employers say that writing proficiency has now become critical in the workplace and that it directly affects hiring and promotion decisions" (as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 8). More and more jobs require employees to produce written documents and prepare presentations that incorporate both visuals and text (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 8). Clearly, solid writing skills are a necessity for every high school student, not only those who are college bound, and any student without adequate writing skills is lacking an essential life skill.

A logical step to improving the writing skills of recent graduates is to improve the instruction they receive. For this reason, this paper will focus on recommendations for improving the writing instruction adolescents receive. For the purpose of this paper, writing instruction will be defined as anything a teacher specifically does for or provides to students with the goal of improving their knowledge of and skills related to writing. While it is impossible to discuss everything a good teacher might do to lead to better understanding of writing and better writing quality, this paper will keep a close focus on current recommendations for achieving these goals.

Limitations of this Paper

Though instruction is certainly an essential element in the improvement of adolescent writing, it is just one element. High quality writing instruction must exist within an environment that welcomes, supports, and is conducive to writing. The teacher must be knowledgeable about language acquisition and development and use this

knowledge to promote student growth in writing. Additionally, the teacher must have a

solid understanding of and basis for assessments—formative, summative, and

standardized. Each of these is important enough to warrant an in-depth look of its own,

but each is beyond the scope of this paper, which will center solely on the improvement

of writing instruction through improved practice.

Organization of this Paper

Now that it has been established that today's recent high school graduates are not

writing as well as life, work, and higher education demands, it is important gain a

common understanding of why this reality might exist. Perhaps it is because writing is a

complex process, or maybe the problem exists because the teaching strategies currently in

use in American high schools across the country are not very effective. Given the

previously identified indicators of inadequate writing skills—a mismatch between what

secondary and post-secondary instructors value about writing, a lack of writing

experience while in high school with the types of writing likely to encountered after high

school, insufficient practice with writing, and a lack of basic writing skills—each could

be addressed within the context of secondary writing instruction.

Considering that effective instruction would alleviate or eliminate many of the

complexity issues for students, this paper will explore inadequate writing instruction,

rather than the complex nature of writing as a cause of poor performance. Research-based

instructional strategies will be offered to possibly improve the instruction adolescents are

currently receiving in many classrooms. However, to effectively implement these

strategies, it is important to be thoughtful and selective, taking into consideration the

specific environment in which the writing instruction will take place; some guidelines for

doing so will be offered. Finally, an illustration of what high quality writing instruction might look like will be provided.

Chapter Two

Overview of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a common understanding of why recent high school graduates might be lacking essential writing skills. There are two likely reasons. One is that writing is a highly complex process that requires students to synthesize several skills and understandings. Similarly, students may not be achieving in writing because writing instruction is a highly complex process that too many teachers do not fully understand or appreciate. The latter leads to instructional environments that are not conducive to writing improvement. In this chapter each of these possibilities will be explored.

The Complexity of Writing

Before one can engage in any serious discourse about writing, it is important to establish a common understanding of the term. According to Hillocks, writing is a complex, recursive task that involves at least five different types of knowledge: "knowledge of the content to be written about; procedural knowledge that enables the manipulation of content; knowledge of discourse structures, including the schema underlying various types of writing (e.g. story, argument); syntactic forms; and the conventions of punctuation and usage and the procedural knowledge that enables the production of a piece of writing of a particular type" (1986b as cited in Hillocks, 1987, p. 73). These five types of knowledge work together to form a highly complex task.

Clearly, writing is not a simple thing—in fact, it is not simply one thing. Writing is varied in form, structure, and process. Writing tasks embody the building of a relationship between the writer and his or her potential audience (NCTE, 2004). In

essence, writing is "thought on paper," or, in today's information age, "thought on screen" (*The Neglected "R",* 2003, p. 16). Writing is much more than grammar and punctuation. It is a complex intellectual activity that requires students to extend their thoughts, refine their abilities to reason, and make distinctions that are both valid and accurate. Simply put, writing is learning (*The Neglected "R",* 2003).

Students engage in this complex task for a variety of reasons. Timothy Shanahan contends that students write for the same reasons they read. Instead of viewing writing as a communicative exercise, educators should view writing as an opportunity to achieve greater understanding. In this sense, one looks to writing experiences with learning, as opposed to communication, as the major goal (2004, p.59-60). This theory derives from the studies of linguist Noam Chomsky who argued that language did not develop in humans because of the need to communicate; rather language developed for thinking (as cited in Shanahan, 2004, p. 60). Consequently, writing must be viewed as a means to gaining greater knowledge, creating and re-creating understanding, not simply as a means for sharing knowledge.

Even with the general understanding of the writing task established so far, there is much more to know. Those who truly understand the nature of writing understand that it is a highly complex process. Hillocks defines the process of writing with eight components. The first component relates to the purposes and constraints of the writing, largely related to content and audience and having significant effects on both the process and product (Hillocks, 1987, p. 73-4). The next two components are reciprocally related—knowledge and processes related to content and knowledge and processes

related to discourse. These elements have to do with the recall and transformation of content and with knowledge of form or genre (1987, p. 74-5).

The next four elements of the Hillocks definition of writing are gist units, semantic units, verbatim units, and grapheme units. These units include pieces of content in a writer's mind that have not yet been laid out in detail, the process of creating written sentences, general ideas of what is to be written, and "sequence[s] of words not yet recorded, but which the writer can state upon request" (Hillocks, 1987, p. 75). Finally, Hillocks identifies editing, or "the correction of spelling or usage, the addition and deletion of words or phrases, [and] the restructuring of syntax," as an illustrative elment of the complexity of writing (Hillocks, 1987, p. 75).

Troia furthers Hillocks' argument about the complexity of writing. His research has shown that the act of composing involves the use and coordination of several cognitive, physical, and linguistic acts at once to accomplish specific goals related to conventions, audience, and communicative purpose. Doing this involves "planning, generating text, transcribing, reviewing, and revising" (Troia, 2003) in a recursive process. Concisely put, writing is a complex process that involves extensive knowledge about language, genre, audience, and purpose that is used to deepen and communicate thinking. However, effective writing instruction breaks this complex process down. Simply put, the best writing instruction makes the act of composing seem natural, as scholars have proven it to be, not difficult.

The Current Status of Writing Instruction

Another reason for this current writing deficiency might be the attention, or lack thereof, recently paid to writing in American high schools. Secondary curricula are

already full of important and necessary things, and writing has often not been included at the level it should be. In *Writing Next* Graham and Perin write, "it is obvious that if today's youngsters cannot read with understanding, think about and analyze what they've read, and then write clearly and effectively about what they've learned and what they think, then they may never be able to do justice to their talents and their potential" (2007, foreword). They also say, "Writing well is not just an option for young people—it is a necessity. Along with reading comprehension, writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy" (Graham & Perin, 2007, Executive Summary). These two contentions alone should heighten the attention of educators.

In spite of a historical emphasis on writing, attention to writing in secondary schools today is waning. Many factors contribute, but one critical factor is time. The reality of writing is that it takes substantial time to teach. It is not enough to spend a few minutes here and there dealing with such important topics as writing process, mechanics, genre, audience. Unfortunately, research shows that about 50% of twelfth graders report being assigned a three or more page paper once or twice a month in their English/Language Arts classes. Even more disconcerting is the fact that almost 40% of these students reported that writing assignments more than three pages long happen either rarely or never. Similarly, the research paper is rarely taught anymore because it is deemed too time consuming (as cited in *The Neglected "R",* 2003, p. 23).

Teacher work loads exacerbate the problem. The typical high school teacher is responsible for 120 to 200 students each week, meaning any teacher who assigns an extended writing task is likely to overwhelmed by the job of reading, responding to, and

evaluating 120 to 200 student papers (*The Neglected "R"*, 2003). Certainly this daunting

task has caused more than one teacher to simply avoid assigning extended writing.

Finally, those who intend to contribute positively to writing achievement must

think carefully about pedagogy. Teachers outside of English/Language Arts often receive

little or no training in the teaching of writing. Sadly, even teachers within the

English/Language Arts also often receive inadequate training related to writing

instruction. Without basic understanding of effective writing instruction, these teachers

will be less than effective at improving student writing. A significant part of this problem

is that teachers rarely, if ever, get opportunities to view themselves as writers, meaning

they miss out on the power and satisfaction writers feel when they learn and express

themselves (*The Neglected "R"*, 2003). Providing positive writing experiences for

practicing teachers would positively impact the treatment of writing in secondary schools

across the nation.

Summary of the Chapter

It is apparent that writing is not a simple thing. It is a complex process closely

related to thinking. In spite of its importance in life work, and school, writing is currently

not receiving the attention it deserves from the educational world. Students are not

writing often enough in school, and the writing practice and instruction students are

receiving is often inadequate. Many factors contribute to this problem, including teacher

work loads and the quality of professional development available.

Chapter Three

Overview of the Chapter

Chapter two described the challenges involved with learning to write and the limitations of current writing instruction. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a literature review of effective strategies for teaching writing.

What the Research Base Says About High Quality Writing Instruction

There are specific things teachers do with the intention of enhancing student learning. For the purpose of this paper, these intentions will be identified as direct instruction. To promote student growth in writing, there are three direct instructional strategies advocated for in the current literature base. These are sentence combining exercises, instruction in and practice of revision, and instruction in explicit writing strategies.

Direct Instructional Techniques to Improve Student Writing

Sentence Combining

One of the direct instruction techniques teachers can use and expect positive results in student writing is sentence combining. This involves "teaching students to construct more complex, sophisticated sentences" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 4). This is generally done by having students put two or more simple sentences together to form a more complex, but clear combined sentence. Students then transfer this practice to their own texts (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 18). Sentence combining techniques generally take place without any direct instruction in grammar or grammar terminology (Hillocks, 1987, p. 79). This method was largely compared to traditional grammar instruction and showed

a clear positive effect of moderate strength (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 18). Studies as early as 1973 (O'Hare) have shown that "direct instruction in producing more complex syntactic structures results not only in greater syntactic complexity, but increased quality (as cited in Hillocks, 1987, p. 79).

In *Because Writing Matters* (2006), Nagin characterizes sentence combining as "an instructional technique designed to help students improve syntactic fluency and vary or expand their repertoire of sentence patterns" (p. 27). In its most simplistic form, this involves students taking two or more short sentences and combining them to form one longer, more complex sentence. In its more complex forms, sentence combining might involve students creating a complex pattern, like parallelism, by imitating a model.

Saddler supports the practice of sentence combining in a writer's workshop setting, claiming that "sentence combining can provide systematic instruction in sentence construction skills within an overall framework of the writing workshop. In fact, researchers have found that sentence-combining practice can help young writers create qualitatively better stories and increase the amount and quality of revisions" (2007, para. 7). This process of building and modifying sentences, teaches students to "untangle, tighten, and rewrite sentences that may be too complex for a reader to easily understand" Saddler, 2007, para. 8). The result is that students who may write short, choppy sentences gain the ability to create more varied and complex sentences that may better reflect what they are trying to communicate.

Zemelman and Daniels add to the sentence-combining argument, saying that having students "combine several short 'kernel' sentences into longer, more complex ones, is strongly associated with improved writing performance" (1988, p. 27). They

argue that it works because it a productive activity rather than an analytic one. The process of combining sentences helps students connect with "their oral language base, their latent knowledge of many complex sentence types, and then to practice transferring this oral knowledge to writing" (p. 27).

While the positive effects of instruction in sentence combining are clearly positively related to improved writing quality, Scardamalia and Bereiter (1983) suggest the sentence combining exercises simply provide the students with more control over complex and varied sentence structures, learned through the manipulation of sentences, that allow them to choose from many alternatives when writing. This theory proposes that sentence combining exercises may not only positively affect composition, but also revision (as cited in Hillocks, 1987, p. 79).

Saddler identifies four specific ways student writing may improve because of well delivered sentence combining practice:

- "Students start considering the reader's perspective during the process of learning and manipulating syntactic options in their own writings.

- Students may reduce the choppy or run-on sentence style. Specific pattern drill and mindful syntactic manipulation allow the writers to become aware of syntactic alternatives. This awareness may boost students' confidence in their ability to manipulate sentence syntax, and make them more willing to vary, experiment, and innovate in their writing.

- Sentence-combining exercises can illustrate how punctuation organizes sentence elements and may help students become confident about punctuation (Lindemann, 1995).

- Sentence-combining practice may foster revision skills by providing an organized knowledge of syntactic structures that enable writers to consider alternatives in sentence structures (Hillocks, 1986)" (2007, para. 9).

With these four outcomes in mind, a skillful teacher can use sentence combining exercises to target certain skill deficits to improve student writing.

As with any instructional strategy, sentence combining exercises are most beneficial for certain students—in this case, students who may be struggling with fluency in their writing. This difficulty may be revealed in students' writing through simplistic sentences or through repetitive sentence structures. Instruction in sentence combining is likely to increase student awareness of such common writing problems and provide them with the means to make their sentences more complex and more varied. Teachers who are comfortable with a traditional, teacher-centered approached to instruction may find this type of research-supported instruction to be easier to implement than some of the other recommendations.

Practice and Instruction Related to Revision

In addition to sentence combining exercises, it is important that effective writing instruction include practice and instruction related to revision. According to Greenwald et al (1999), McGee, and Richels (1990), "revision is central to using writing to extend learning. Revision is not about correcting usage, grammar, and spelling, but is more about revisiting and rethinking the original document" (as cited in Shanahan, 2004, pg. 69). Students must be taught how to engage in this highly complex task.

Nagin (2006) explains that, during revising, a writer engages with a text with the eye of an editor, locating and subtracting extra material, focusing the content of the draft,

and amplifying important material. This involves making structural changes to the draft, something he calls macro-editing, or "refining content and creating structure by organizing ideas and themes into sequenced, coherent paragraphs" (p. 26).

Revision can happen in many forms within a classroom and context and does not necessarily have to be the same for every student or every writing situation. In an observational journal recording the revision activities of her own classroom, Kaye E. Hink identified six different ways students engaged in revision activities. These were: "revision in an individual conference with the teacher, revision in a group conference with the teacher, individual revision while working alone, revision with another student, long-range revision, and revision by expanding a journal entry" (1985, p. 250). While these same forms may not appear in every classroom setting, they are illustrative of the diverse forms revision can take.

One common element that should be present in all instruction about revision is that it should be rooted in a larger understanding of revision that acknowledges contextual, semantic, lexical, and stylistic considerations (Shah, 1986, p. 6). Too many students revise to correct errors, rather than to improve the text's representation of meaning. Teachers can and should direct students' attention to revision for meaning by freeing them of the burdens of attending to mechanics during working or early drafts. Shah further suggests that strategies for revision may be developed by the class through revision of a common text, individually through conferences, or in small groups working on a common writing assignment. Instruction in and practice of revision should not be overlooked because it has been clearly shown to positively effect the quality of the final written product (Shah, 1987).

Nancie Atwell further explains the benefits of teaching students how to revise. In her foundational book, *In the Middle,* she says, "I've learned that when students don't revise their writing, it's usually because they don't know how" (1998, p. 162). She advocates for providing students with methods for adding and deleting information as well as changing and moving information. She teaches these methods through mini lessons using drafts of her own writing. She teaches basic revision devices, such as carets for inserting words and phrases, highlighting in different colors to reorganize, and asterisks for inserting passages, as well as many other revision techniques. This instruction helps students get started, and once they gain experience they internalize the act of revision.

Zemelman and Daniels explain that "revising is a vital step, a skill and mindset for all good writers" and argue that effective teachers must go beyond showing students how to revise, also teaching them why it is necessary to revise. Students tend to have a negative view of writing, believing that "revision time usually means you did it wrong at first, and your punishment is to correct lots of errors marked in red" (1988, p. 171). When teachers fail to counter this perception, the results are, unfortunately, quite predictable: "kids grudgingly re-skim their text, fixing up a couple of minor surface errors, often leaving the gravest proofreading problems untouched, and much worse, completely neglecting the real issues of rewriting: order, logic, detail, support, word choice, metaphor, point of view, and all the rest" (p. 171).

In *A Community of Writers* Zemelman and Daniels offer eleven principles which support some strategies teachers can use to teach the when, what, and why of revision. They say students are more likely to revise well when:

- Write on topics of genuine personal meaning

- Writing is regularly read aloud

- They write for real audiences

- The tools and supplies of writing are readily available

- Models of writing in process are displayed

- The teacher writes while students write

- The teacher focuses on content, meaning, support, clarity, and detail in early drafts

- Students write, knowing that revision will occur

- Student writing is routinely saved in a way they can readily return to a text at anytime

- Students work with peers as mutual audiences, collaborators, helpers, and editors (pp. 172-173).

Students rarely spontaneously engage in revision for meaning, but teachers can provide systems and processes that encourage and assist students in doing so.

Teaching students about revision and how to revise, while providing them with many and diverse opportunities to practice revision on their own and others' writing is helpful for students of all abilities and needs. It is an instructional strategy that will make an overall impact on student writing quality in varied forms and positively influence student confidence about their own writing abilities.

Explicit Instruction in Writing Strategies

While sentence combining exercises have proven effective at improving student writing, and instruction about and practice of revision are critical to growing better

student writers, explicit instruction in writing strategies had the largest effect size of any

of the instructional methods studied, showing the greatest effects with low-achieving

writers (Graham and Perin, 2007, p. 15). This "involves teaching students strategies for

planning, revising, and editing their compositions" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 4). Taught

strategies may be anything from simple brainstorming activities to more complex

collaboration activities for peer revision.

  One process is called Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD). According

to Troia, it is "one example of a strategy intervention that has been used successfully with

both struggling and good writers" (2003, p. 80). With this model, the teacher

demonstrates how to use a particular strategy, then provides individual students with as

much support as they need as they work toward mastery of the strategy (Troia, 2003).

The strategy has been used successfully to teach a range of strategies from

brainstorming, story grammar, and revising using peer feedback. This model has led to

distinct improvement in four areas: "quality of writing, knowledge of writing, approach

to writing, and attitudes about writing" (Troia, 2003, p. 81). It involves guiding students

through a six-step process: develop background knowledge, describe the strategy and its

benefits, model the strategy, memorize the strategy, support the mastery of the strategy,

and use the strategy independently. Within this model students are taught skills for self-

regulation (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 15).

Troia highlights six individual instructional stages as a part of SRSD that can be

reordered, combined, modified, or even omitted to meet particular students' needs. These

include: brainstorming, semantic webbing, generating, organizing writing content, using

text structure organization, revising with the use of peer feedback, and revising for both

substance and mechanics (2006). The goal of writing strategy instruction is for students

to be able to use the strategies independently (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 15).

Given the large effect size, explicit strategy instruction is worthy of a long look

by teachers interested in improving the quality of their students writing. While it is not

necessary to adhere closely to a specific approach or strategy for teaching students to

regulate themselves as writers, it is important to provide them with specific or several

strategies. Students should then be provided with supported opportunities to master the

strategies, understand how and when to implement the strategies, and evaluate the

effectiveness of the strategies.

Tacit Instructional Techniques to Improve Student Writing

In combination with these direct instructional techniques, teachers who wish to

positively affect student writing must provide certain opportunities and circumstances

within their classes. For the purpose of this paper, these circumstances and opportunities

will be referred to as tacit instruction. The seven tacit strategies that will be explored are

a writing process approach, free writing, the provision of scales, writing for authentic

purposes, extended writing, and access to technology.

Teaching Writing as a Process

Researchers advocate for writing teachers to take a writing as process approach

with their writing students. This approach "interweaves a number of writing instructional

activities in a workshop environment that stresses extended writing opportunities, writing

for authentic audiences, personalized instruction, and cycles of writing" (Graham &

Perin, 2007, p. 4). Though the effect size of process writing was small to moderate, it was

clearly significant. Explicit teacher training is a major factor in the success of the process

writing approach to teaching writing, making a significant difference in the effect size of the approach (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 20).

Over the past twenty years those who understand writing and the teaching of writing have come to "see writing not just as a process taking place inside an author's head, but as a collaborative act influenced by complex and interrelated social factors" (Fleischman and Unger, 2004, para. 4). Putting this theory into practice can be difficult for teachers. Fleischman and Unger share "instructional guidelines for five stages of the writing process: (1) engaging in prewriting tasks; (2) creating an initial draft; (3) revising the text; (4) editing for conventions; and (5) publishing or presenting a polished final draft" (2004, para. 3). Teachers implement writing process instruction by conducting writers' workshops, having students complete multiple drafts of their papers, engaging in frequent individual and small-group conferences with students, and facilitating peer review of written texts (Fleischman and Unger, 2004).

Wilhelm and Smith expand on this notion of writing as a process. They define writing process as "a recursive process in which the writer considers purpose and audience as she shifts back and forth, finding ideas, developing those ideas, and clarifying thinking for the strongest, clearest meaning through intentional revision and editing" (p. 191). They make it clear that individual writers use different processes that are dependent upon task, purpose, audience, and style. Wilhelm and Smith urge teachers to "recognize and honor" these differences, while learning from and responding to individual students as, "one student works without our guidance and another asks for a lot of instruction" (as cited in Beers, Probst, & Rief, 2007, p. 191).

Nagin characterizes writing processes as " any of the activities or thinking strategies used to compose a piece of writing" (2006, p. 26). Sometimes these activities and strategies might be referred to as "cycles of planning (generating ideas, setting goals, and organizing), translating (putting a plan into writing), and reviewing (evaluating and revising)" (p. 26). They might also be referred to as "prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing" (p. 26). Donald Graves says, "The writing process is anything a writer does from the time the idea comes until the piece is complete or abandoned. There is no particular order. So it's not effective to teach writing process in a lock-step, rigid manner. What a good writing teacher does is help students see where writing comes from" (as cited in Nagin, 2006, p. 22).

Janet Emig further notes that the process view of teaching writing is about an experience rather than a product. She argues that writing is learned, not taught and frequently engages unconscious processes. Emig believes that writers learn best when they attempt whole texts, rather than mastering small skills or parts before attempting to write whole texts. Finally, she notes the social and collaborative nature of writing, as opposed to the traditional view of writing as a silent and solitary activity (as cited in Zemelman and Daniels, 1988).

While this writing process approach can seem initially daunting to teachers, especially those who are comfortable with more traditional instructional approaches, many practitioners identify it as a critical element in the quest to improve student writing. There are places teachers can turn for support and guidance as they work toward an effective workshop setting. One good source of training in the writing as process teaching approach is the National Writing Project (NWP). This model trains teachers to facilitate

the following: peers working together, inquiry, and sentence-combining (Graham and

Perin, 2007, p. 20).

Free Writing

As an enhancement of any writing workshop environment, Hillocks explores free

writing as an approach to teaching writing. In free writing activities students write

without inhibitions about whatever is of interest to them. In nearly all effective

instructional environments where free writing is used, students are also engaged in

activities such as sharing ideas, giving and receiving peer feedback in small groups,

redrafting, and receiving teacher feedback, and writing as a process. While Hillocks

found a small effect of free writing on writing improvement, there is a clear positive

effect (1987, p. 80). With this understanding, free writing should be viewed as a valid

supplemental writing activity to support other more influential instructional techniques.

Peter Elbow expands the definition of free writing, saying it is "private, nonstop

writing—literally putting words on paper continuously without regard for the usual

constraints of staying on topic or writing correctly" (as cited in Nagin, 2006, p. 26). This

type of exploratory writing can help students when they feel stuck or confused. It can also

serve to generate ideas, develop thought, and energize a writing task. Free writing is often

used as a type of warm up exercise in writing classrooms.

As with many of the other strategies identified, it is important that free writing not

be the sole instructional feature of a class with improved student writing as a goal. Free

writing addresses important aspects of writing, such as processing thoughts and getting

thoughts on paper, while building the confidence of the writer. When used to meet these

goals, free writing is an instructional strategy that should not be overlooked.

Daniels and Bizar suggest that free writing entries should not be collected or graded. Rather, they propose using these texts as springboards for other activities. For instance, at the start of a class period students might respond to questions posed by the teacher. These free writing responses may be shared aloud and even become part of the official agenda of the day. Similarly, free writing activities can be used as "exit slips" to explain or identify things that were intriguing or confusing about the day's activties. These can inform the following day's instruction (1998, p. 98).

Provision of Scales

Another effective instructional strategy teachers should consider in the quest to improve student writing is the provision of scales. Whether done directly or indirectly, "these methods present students with sets of criteria for judging and revising compositions" (Hillocks, 1987, p. 79). Students are taught quality ratings that evaluate elements of written text such as elaboration, word choice, and organization. These may simply be clear criteria without quantification meant to assist developing writers as they engage in writing as a process. Students participate in guided practice with the scales and then practice rating texts on their own before using the scales to evaluate their own or others' draft stage writing. When a draft receives any rating other than the highest, students are provided with prompts to help them generate ideas for improvement. This type of instruction impacts nearly every aspect of writing, including composition, selection of content, development of plans for the writing, arrangement of ideas, and the content and structure of the piece (Hillocks, 1987, p. 79).

Given their wide impact on the quality of student writing, scales might be considered as an effective instructional strategy in any classroom. While it can be rather

time intensive, integrated into a workshop setting, this strategy can be used to the benefit of students. The provision of scales can provide structure to workshop settings for teachers unsure of how to get started in a writing as process approach, though there is danger in limiting students to an understanding of the scales, rather than a deep understanding of composing.

Writing for Authentic Purposes

Another important opportunity for student writers is to be able to write for authentic purposes. In spite of the varied demands of real-life writing, school based writing has traditionally placed a disproportionate emphasis on certain formats of essays, such as the five-paragraph or keyhole essay. To produce skilled writers, schools must focus on the instruction and practice of "a variety of forms, strategies, knowledge, and skills…[students] can apply flexibly to achieve their writing goals" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 22).

According to Wiggins, teachers should never be asking students to write for purposes not related to real world writing tasks. Simply put, the writing of formulaic or contrived texts fails to prepare students for the kinds of writing they will do in the real world (1998). In the world outside of school, people email, write letters, and collect research. Rarely do people construct well-supported and well-organized responses to writing prompts. Overemphasizing writing for school purposes at the expense of all other purposes, fails to provide students with the skills and experiences they need for writing in their everyday lives.

Daniels and Bizar expand on the importance of authentic experiences in writing. The say these "authentic experiences in schools can be as small as writing a real letter to

ask for an autographed picture" (1998, p. 171). They also note that several national

content area organizations recognize the importance of authentic learning experiences,

including The National Academy of Science and The National Council for Social

Studies. In authentic writing experiences students are not storing skills or knowledge to

be used at a later date, but are instead involved in learning that has meaning for them

now.

Opportunities for Extended Writing

Additionally, Shanahan advocates for opportunities to engage in extended writing.

Extended writing creates the ground for extended learning. Such writing allows for a

wider choice of approaches (personal, analytical, and critical) and it requires a more

through coordination of information from the source text, presentation, or discussion.

Bangert-Drowns clarifies that extended writing does not necessarily mean longer in terms

of time or length. What is more important is that in class time be spent on frequent, short

(8-9 minutes) writing opportunities two to three times a week over an extended period of

time. The type of writing is also important; metacognitive prompts have a greater effect

size than personal writing.

Access to Technology

An important consideration for teachers of writing is that students engaged in the

process of learning to be good writers need access to technology. They need to be able to

use "computers and word processors as instructional supports for writing assignments"

(Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 4). The use of word processing programs for writing has a

particularly strong effect on lower-achieving writers. One of the factors may simply be

the production of a legible and neat text for revision, allowing the writer to add, delete, or rearrange text easily (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 17).

While the technology component is a given in many schools across the nation, it is still utterly lacking in many more. Simply put, accessing technology, as real writers do, simplifies some aspects of the writing process. Anything teachers can do to make such a highly complex task more accessible to students should be a top priority when working toward improved student writing, thus allowing more time for attention to the complex mental tasks related to writing.

Most significantly, the act of revising becomes more engaging through technology. Students are more easily able to share drafts and communicate with each other with the help of technology. Response, revision, and editing are much simpler because of technology. Technology facilitates private, one-on-one conversations between students and between the teacher and students. This ease of communication and change may even encourage students to take more risks with their writing—altering paragraphs, changing words, and modifying phrases. Lastly, the texts can easily be accessible to audiences of any size and in any location (Nagin, 2006, pp. 29-30).

Isolated Grammar Instruction

As an afterthought to what research has shown does work, it is also worthwhile to note what does not work, particularly since one instructional strategy is so commonly used to promote writing growth. Schools across the state rely on or even mandate the instruction of grammar, meaning "the explicit and systematic teaching of the parts of speech and structure of sentences" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 21). Unsurprisingly, research on the effect size of this type of instruction showed its effect to be statistically

significant. What is surprising is that the effect is negative, meaning it is unlikely to improve any participant's writing quality (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 21).

Research by Hillocks (1987) supports the ideas of Graham and Perin. In the Hillocks study students were taught the parts of speech, components of sentences, and different kinds of clauses and sentences. He found that many teachers assume that grammar knowledge is an essential element in producing clear and effective writing, in spite of arguments from linguists that traditional grammar does not adequately characterize language. Based on careful analysis, Hillocks firmly states, "the study of grammar does not contribute to growth in the quality of student writing" (p. 77). If understanding of grammar is used at all during the composing process, it is used at the proofreading and editing levels, not when defining purpose, process, content, or style (Hillocks, 1987, p. 77-8).

What is indicated is teaching the "mechanics of writing in the context of students' own compositions, rather than in separate exercises and drills" (Zemelman & Daniels, 1988, p. 27). There is often little or no transfer between what students are able to do in controlled skill and drill situations and what they can do in actual pieces of writing. The transfer problem occurs because the cognitive tasks required to get answers right on a skill test are completely different than those required in a real writing situation. In the latter students must attend to and balance a myriad of factors—audience, content, purpose, tone, vocabulary, rhetoric, mechanics, and others. If the goal is for students to consistently demonstrate understanding of grammar, usage, and mechanics in actual writing, then the mechanics must be addressed within the texts students create themselves (Zemelman & Daniels, 1988, pp. 27-28).

Summary of the Chapter

While the preceding recommendations are by no means comprehensive, these nine instructional strategies advocated in the current literature base can and should be a starting point for teachers working toward improved student writing. A teacher looking to improve the quality of student writing should consider sentence combining exercises, instruction in and practice of revision, instruction in writing strategies, a writing process approach, free writing activities, the provision of scales, writing for authentic purposes, extended writing activities, and access to technology. As teachers take a critical look at their own instruction, they should add missing elements, making time for the missing components by cutting those not supported by current research.

Chapter Four

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter will synthesize the previously identified, research-based recommendations for improved student writing into explicit recommendations for teachers. Because specific strategies were identified in the preceding review of current research literature, this chapter will include recommendations for selecting and incorporating each of the strategies supported in the research base. These strategies have been ordered to suggest relative importance.

Classroom Applications of Instructional Strategies

Writing is a complex activity for both children and adults. While the task of writing often causes anxiety on the part of student writers, it has also been known to cause even the most respected teachers to feel anxious and frustrated, leading to avoidance and neglect of writing instruction.

Many teachers cite a lack of knowledge, skills, and strategies for teaching writing as the reason they avoid it (Troia, 2003). Truly, effectively teaching writing requires that teaches possess a unique set of instructional strategies (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 8). Of course, how one views writing is a central force impacting how one instructs writing. When teachers begin to embrace writing as a cognitive process, the instructional focus shifts from being centered on the form of writing to how students can learn from and grow as a result of writing (Shanahan, 2004, p. 61).

It is important to understand that no single approach to writing instruction can meet the needs of every student and that some effective writing strategies may not yet be rigorously studied. Clearly, some instructional strategies for the teaching of writing have

been proven effective, and writing instruction needs significantly more research and dissemination. Even more clearly, student writers need "regular and substantial practice at writing" to get better at it (Zemelman & Daniels, 1988, p. 21).

　　With this is mind, teachers should carefully and deliberately select instructional strategies that are most appropriate for the whole class, small groups of students, and for individual students. Just as medical professionals tailor their interventions to meet the unique needs of each patient, "educators need to test mixes of intervention elements to find the right ones that work best for students with different needs" (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 12). Educators should focus on ongoing data collection and analysis to drive the decisions they make in regards to writing instruction. Teachers should observe students while they are writing and analyze their writing samples and test scores to match the most appropriate interventions with the needs (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 23).

　　Though it is difficult to make broad recommendations that will be effective in every classroom, research does appear to support a significant increase in individualized and explicit teaching related to writing. This may include modeling, guided and individualized practice and coaching, providing informative and substantial feedback, and engaging students in many and various writing opportunities (Troia, 2003). The instruction should be put together in a way that capitalizes on each student's understandings and experiences while building a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the task of composing.

　　With corporations and agencies across the country advocating for wholesale adoption of writing programs, it is critical to understand that the best writing instruction is contextualized—to the school, the classroom, and the student. The most effective

means for this type of instruction is within the workshop setting. The writing workshop provides the students with the individualized practice they need and the teacher with the opportunity to offer individualized instruction.

The Workshop Approach to Teaching Writing

Daniels and Bizar call the "classroom as workshop" one of the "most powerful instructional metaphors to emerge in recent years" (1998, p. 130). In this "simple and powerful" model, "classrooms are no longer merely locations where information is transmitted," but "instead they become working laboratories or studios where genuine knowledge is created, real products are made, and authentic inquiry pursued" (1998, p. 130). The instructional model is reliant on the understanding that students learn by doing, so they need less telling and more doing to truly learn.

Specifically, Daniels and Bizar call for less whole-class directed instruction, student passivity, seat work, time spent with textbooks, rote memorization, tracking, use of pull-out programs, and others. They advocate for more hands-on learning, active learning, emphasis on higher order thinking, deep study, responsibility transferred to students for their work, choice for students, attention to varying cognitive styles of individual students, collaborative work, and heterogeneous groupings within classrooms (1998).

Writing for Authentic Purposes

Within a workshop setting, it is important to provide students with opportunities to write for real purposes and real audiences. Current research supports providing students with opportunities to engage in writing for authentic purposes. Students should be encouraged to write for the same reasons adults write—to inform, to reflect, to

persuade, etc. Teachers should provide students with varied opportunities for writing as it happens in the adult world. This likely means moving away from the narrowly structured five paragraph essay toward more authentic texts, such as cover letters, multi-genre papers, and personal essays. This does not necessarily mean that students should never be taught the formal research paper, but it does mean that writing for school purposes should be balanced with writing for real world purposes.

Opportunities to Engage in Extended Writing

Along the same lines, students must be provided with opportunities to engage in extended writing. This does not necessarily mean that students should constantly write ten page papers, but it means that students must have the opportunity to work with a text over an extended period of time. In a workshop setting, some students may choose to work with one text day after day, honing until they feel released from it, while others may choose to simultaneously work with eight or ten different texts, working on each as they feel moved. The critical component is that the students be able to revisit and rework a single text over an extended period of time.

Instruction in and Practice with Revision

Instruction in and practice with revision is something all students should be involved in. During the workshop, the teacher should provide direct instruction to the whole class about the nature of revision. This is also a prime opportunity for teacher modeling; students can benefit tremendously from a knowledgeable writer sharing his or her own writing experiences. The instruction related to revision should teach students several different methods—such as guided and unguided response and self, peer, and group response—informing their practice of each strategy in a supportive environment.

To become better writers, students need to be able to practice and select the methods that best fit their unique writing processes.

Opportunities for Free Writing

Another instructional strategy supported by the current research is free writing. All students benefit from opportunities to write without restriction or limitation. While it is unwise to build an entire writing program around free writing, it is an essential element of any writing workshop. Many teachers use free writing to build student confidence with writing. Having opportunities to write about topics of interest without the cloud of evaluation hanging overhead, allows students to focus on the topic and the writing task at hand. These free writing exercises can be very simply incorporated in small, often wasted periods of time in the workshop. For instance, teachers often find success with free writing exercises centered on a common prompt at bell time while the teacher takes attendance and deals with other teacher tasks. Many teachers find that, along with increased confidence, students also find it easier to get ideas on paper and produce more fluent writing as a result of free writing exercises.

Explicit Instruction of Writing Strategies

Similarly, all students benefit from instruction in explicit writing strategies. When students are taught and coached through several methods for idea generation, planning, text generation, revision, and editing, they have more opportunities to supplement and improve their current approaches to writing tasks. While teachers should instruct all students in the selected writing strategies, students must be allowed some freedom within the workshop setting as to how and when they will employ individual strategies. For instance, students may be required to show that that have used a strategy for different

parts of the composing process, but they may be free to choose the strategy best aligned with their skills, needs, or natural tendencies.

Access to Technology

Access to technology comes into play in workshop setting, simplifying several parts of the composing process. Students can readily store and access research material when they have electronic databases available to them. They can easily make changes and additions to texts in progress with access to word processing programs. Students can easily share their own works with others and access the works of their peers through class blog sites. Simply put, having access to current technology allows students to focus less on the tasks related to writing, such as rewriting a handwritten text or searching through a cumbersome card catalog, freeing them to spend more time thinking deeply about their own writing and the writing of others, allowing for deeper and more substantial growth.

Practice Sentence Combining

In a workshop setting, teachers can effectively employ sentence-combining exercises with those students who would benefit the most from them. As the research literature suggests, the students who benefit the most from such exercises are those who struggle with fluency in their writing. Teachers should identify those students with fluency issues, based on observation of student writing samples and observations during workshop time, and provide them with instruction on and practice with sentence combining. Ideally, this should be done using the students' own writing, providing more ownership. Students who are not struggling with sentence fluency likely do not need to spend time working on sentence combining and should be using their time to work on issues within their own writing.

The Provision of Scales

A supplement to the workshop setting could be the provision of scales. These scales could be used as instructive tools to improve student writing. Perhaps their greatest benefit might be the acquisition of a common language within the class. In implementation, the provision of scales might begin with large group instruction and practice with the terms and definitions used within the scale model. An example might be something similar to Six + One Traits, using ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation as the common language for talking about writing. Students should be instructed to gain a common understanding of various levels of quality related to each of the elements. As students produce drafts of their writing, these common terms, definitions, and scales could be used in peer conferencing, teacher conferencing, and other ways to discuss specific strengths and weaknesses of the text.

Summary of the Chapter

While it may seem overwhelming and at times contradictory to look at a list of current research-based recommendations and ponder how they might fit within the context of an individual writing curriculum, it is possible to thoughtfully and deliberately enhance writing instruction by incorporating current research. The critical component is ensuring that each of the recommendations is folded into a solid base knowledge of effective writing instruction. The writing workshop is a prime opportunity for doing just that. It allows for large group instruction, small group instruction, and individualized instruction deliberately constructed to best meet the needs of every student writer in the classroom.

Chapter Five

Overview of the Chapter

The previous synthesis of research has demonstrated how theory can drive practice in writing instruction. This chapter will further illustrate that practice by providing a narrative account of a fictional classroom in which all of the research recommendations are put in place. The purpose of this chapter is to show how the complexity advocated in current literature can be implemented to affect student writing performance and quality.

Putting it all Together: Effective Writing Instruction in Practice

Context

Tammy Marks teaches high school language arts at a small, suburban school in the Midwest. After teaching for five years, she has classes ranging from LA 9 to Advanced Placement Composition under her belt. Over the last two years, however, she has focused on improving 11th grade Composition, a course required of all students in Tammy's high school. While held to high expectations by her school and district administration for student writing achievement, Tammy also has significant autonomy in her classroom; she is free to experiment with various instructional theories and practices.

The class meets daily for 54 minutes for one semester, approximately 18 weeks of school. The classroom is an inviting space with 25 desks arranged in a horseshoe, open to a chalkboard and screen at the front of the room. Alternative seating options for students include body pillows, disk chairs, and a round table with four chairs for small group interaction. Lining the back three walls of the room are fifteen computers which afford students access to various programs and the internet. Ms. Marks did not have these

computers when she first started teaching at the school, but knowing that access to technology is a critical element in writing instruction, she requested and received a few computers each year until she reached the maximum number her classroom could physically hold. At any given moment, the room is bustling with various activities.

Because it is a required class, Ms. Marks' students are highly diverse in terms of interests, abilities, and levels of motivation. The class includes students with special needs—both at the high and low ends of the spectrum—and general education students, totaling 25 students in all. However, each must successfully complete Ms. Marks' composition class to meet the district's standards for graduation. A two week journey through composition with Ms. Marks will show how all eleven instructional recommendations come together in a classroom setting.

Approximately midway through the semester, the 25 students are clearly accustomed to established routines and practices. The students in Ms. Marks' class understand that this is their place. They move about freely and seek input and guidance from the teacher and other students at will. As a rule, they encounter very little large group instruction—perhaps some directions or a mini-lesson on a timely topic. In general the students make their way into the classroom and get started on whatever their current writing task may be.

At this point in the class, students are beginning to work on a research report that will show they understand how to engage in the information literacy process to access and use resources to support a thesis statement in this essay. The students will also demonstrate their mastery of electronic databases and MLA style guidelines for scholarly writing. Students have been instructed to select any topic that is of interest to them, locate

at least three credible sources on the topic, and use the source material to support a position on the topic. This writing task will take the students approximately a week and a half, but Ms. Marks believes such opportunities for extended writing are well worth the time investment.

Day One (Monday)

Today students are selecting a research topic. Because Ms. Marks is committed to a process approach to teaching writing, she has taught the students a strategy for identifying and selecting possible research topics. Ms. Marks says, "Before you select a topic, I want you to try a strategy I call the List of Lists. You will make six different lists of five possible topics. From this compilation of 30 possible ideas, I want you to select the three topics you think are most promising. Do a quick, keyword search for each of these possibilities, then write some brief notes about what you found. For example, how many sources did your search reveal? Skim a source or two and comment on the quality of information contained in each. After doing this, select the one topic that appears to best fit your research interest and needs."

She projects a Power Point slide of the six list topics:

> List five things:
>
> - You like
>
> - You dislike
>
> - Recently in the news
>
> - People would say you're an expert on
>
> - You'd like to know more about
>
> - You'd fight for

One student asks, "Will we need to hand this in?" Ms. Marks explains that the activity is a prewriting activity that will not be graded separately, but that it must be turned in as proof of process with the final draft. After a few more clarifying questions, students get to work on their lists of lists. Ms. Marks circulates among them, commenting on lists in progress and answering more individual questions as they arise. The class period comes to an end with nearly every student done with most of the lists. Several students have already started their keyword searches, but a few students still have significant progress to make on their lists. Ms. Marks instructs the students to have the List of Lists assignment completed before they come to class tomorrow. She explains that they will be crafting thesis statements and beginning to locate sources during class time tomorrow.

Explanation

From this first day of instruction, it is clear that Ms. Marks is using a workshop approach to teach writing. The workshop approach to teaching writing is the ideal way to go about incorporating the instructional practices recommended in Chapter Three because

is allows the teacher to select from the recommended promising practices and apply them with individual students, small groups of students, or the entire class without interrupting the writing that should be occurring every day. In this instructional approach, the classroom is arranged to be conducive to the varied tasks that occur on a daily basis in an effective writing workshop. In short, it is the setting within which the rest of the recommendations can and should happen.

Further, Ms. Marks is supporting a process approach to writing when she encourages students to engage in a prewriting activity that she learned from one of her colleagues (Newkirk, 1993). This process approach to teaching writing is clearly supported in the current literature, with Graham and Perin (2007); Fleischmann and Unger (2004); Beers, Probst, and Rief (2007); Nagin (2006); and Zemelman and Daniels (1988) all proclaiming its effectiveness. When the underlying belief held by teachers and students is that writing is an individualized process, the other instructional recommendations can be incorporated into a writing process to positively influence the quality of the end text.

Finally, Ms. Marks has provided explicit instruction related to writing—in this case, she has taught the students a strategy for selecting a topic. Such explicit instruction in writing strategies is strongly advocated for by Graham and Perin (2007) and Troia (2003). Ms. Marks models what Troia describes as demonstrating a strategy, then providing individual students with as much support as they need as they work toward mastery of the strategy. Of course, this type of instruction can apply to other aspects of writing in addition to planning, including revising and editing.

Day Two (Tuesday)

Because Ms. Marks believes strongly in the value of free writing, she decides, as she does several times a week, to have the students begin the next class period writing in response to a prompt. Ms. Marks wants her students to practice getting the ideas from their heads onto paper in a low-stakes activity. Students receive credit simply for completing the writing task. She believes that this sort of writing makes students more fluent writers and eases some of their anxiety about sharing their thoughts on paper. She also likes the opportunity these writing prompts often afford her to get to know her students in a more personal way. Students enjoy the writing prompts because Ms. Marks always responds to their papers. They say they feel like the writing prompts offer them a chance to interact with their teacher in a more individual and personal way than many other school activities allow.

So, as the students file in for class the next day, Ms. Marks asks the students to invest about ten minutes writing in response to one of three provided writing prompts while she takes attendance and submits a lunch count for the office. After these are collected, Ms. Marks gets students working on locating sources. She announces that three valid sources are due by the end of class tomorrow. The students are instructed to think back to the mini lesson they had on locating and identifying good source material as they select sources for this writing task. Students move around the room, most of them sitting in front of one of the fifteen classroom computers. Others sit at desks and read source material.

During this time Ms. Marks circulates around the classroom and checks for satisfactory completion of yesterday's List of Lists assignments. She also answers

questions, asks questions, and assists students as they work on locating sources for their research reports. She always does this during workshop time because she believes it is the most effective and efficient way to provide the varied and individual guidance her students need. Once she has talked with each student in the room, Ms. Marks calls a student to her desk to confer over the previous assignment. She uses this conference time to provide the students with explanation of her written feedback to their writing and with individualized instruction on needed topics. She continues doing so until the end of class, stopping occasionally to answer student questions.

Explanation

In Ms. Marks' writing workshop, students are receiving mini lessons on common topics, but working independently, also receiving further individualized instruction when needed. Mini lessons are one of the most efficient and effective ways to accomplish several of the instructional recommendations from Chapter Three. Mini lessons allow the teacher to provide direct instruction on topics related to editing and revising without taking away much class time, allowing students to spend the maximum amount of time writing, rather than listening to the teacher talk about writing or working activities related to writing.

Ms. Marks has shown one way to incorporate free writing into the writing classroom, and her students seem to respond positively to it. Free writing is most strongly supported by Hillocks (1987) as an enhancement to writing instruction, but also supported by Elbow (as cited in Nagin) and Daniels and Bizar (1998). In practice, free writing exercises can serves as "bellringers" or management activities that keep students occupied while the teacher takes care of routine tasks, such as attendance. The bonus to

using free writing as a bellringer is that it supports the development of the student writers who are engaging in it as well.

Lastly, Ms. Marks' classroom is an example of how technology is integrated in a workshop setting. Graham and Perin (2007) point out the positive effect technology has on lower achieving writers, and Nagin (2006) highlights the motivating effect it has on revision. Nonetheless, most writing teachers see technology as an essential component to any writing workshop, particularly because today's students are so accustomed to writing with the assistance of technology.

Day Three (Wednesday)

Ms. Marks begins the class period with a large group mini lesson on a common error in previous writing—comma splices. When responding to the previous writing assignment, Ms. Marks was struck by the prevalence of this problem. Fourteen of the twenty-one students who handed in the assignment on time had comma splices in their writing. This takes approximately the first ten minutes of class, but Ms. Marks believes it is well worth the time. She uses these mini lessons as opportunities to teach her students how to talk about sentences and use grammatical terms correctly. This particular lesson uses terms such as independent clause, dependent clause, and coordinating conjunction.

Once the mini lesson is completed, and Ms. Marks feels reasonably sure that the majority of the class has a solid understanding of how to avoid comma splices in their writing, she transitions the students back to work on their research reports. She reminds them that their three sources are due by the end of class and instructs the students to get to work, keeping in mind what she just shared about comma splices.

Again, students disburse around the room, with several students letting their teacher know that they already have their sources and would like to show them to her. Ms. Marks instructs them to form a "virtual line" and begin reading and annotating their sources until their turn. Students are familiar with the virtual line that simply requires them each to put their name on the board, indicating an order for the teacher's attention. Ms. Marks calls the first name, and Joe gets up, erases his name from the line and sits at Ms. Marks's desk to talk about the three sources he has located. He shares why he selected each source and how he hopes to use each in his paper. Ms. Marks asks a few questions designed to get Joe thinking about aspects of his topic he may not have thought of before and eventually approves his selected sources before moving on to the next student in the virtual line.

While Ms. Marks talks to Joe, another student adds her name to the end of the virtual line and returns to her seat, reading and annotating her sources while waiting to be called. Ms. Marks works her way through the line, finishing with about ten minutes of class left. This allows her time to circulate the room once before taking the last five minutes of workshop time to talk to the entire class. She reminds them of the process they'll be going through as they finish the research report. They will complete a draft by Monday, engage in a structured peer response activity, make any changes they decide upon, and submit a polished draft for grading by Wednesday. She asks some questions about how to go about creating a thorough but concise report of their findings. Students suggest things like creating a list of main ideas, creating an outline, and creating an idea web. She validates each of these ideas and suggests that this would be a good time to try

any of these or others, especially drafting ideas offered their classmates that they may not have tried before.

Ms. Marks believes strongly in encouraging each student to try different methods for prewriting, revision, and editing. Though this is not required of the students, she believes that experimentation with different process approaches will help each student identify what works best for him or her, hopefully leading to a more effective and efficient writing process for each student. Ms. Marks believes such explicit guidance related to writing strategies and approaches is beneficial to her students and ultimately makes them better writers.

Explanation

Day three has shown more detail of how a writing workshop is managed—students are working individually with as much guidance as they need. The teacher is providing specific feedback to student writing and instruction in response to student needs as demonstrated through their own compositions. Ms. Marks has also shown further support for instruction related to writing strategies. Each of these factors provide more insight into the structure that supports the instructional recommendations made in Chapter Three. Individual conferences can be a powerful way to engage in one-on-one instruction of the skills and concepts most critical to each student.

Day Four (Thursday)

At the beginning of class on Thursday, students file in and once again begin working on one of the free writing prompts on the board. Since they do this several times a week, students don't need to be verbally prompted to get started. When Ms. Marks is finished with attendance, lunch count, and passing out notes from the office, she spends

five minutes reminding students of MLA Style citation guidelines for in-text citations and for Works Cited Pages. She elicits responses from the class to clarify the voice appropriate for this type of writing—objective, third person—and the formality of that voice. Through carefully selected genres of writing, Ms. Marks attempts to provide students with practice writing in varied levels of formality and familiarity. She believes these varied experiences build students' abilities to be flexible with their writing, a strength as they encounter many different writing tasks and expectations in the future. At this point, students are ready to continue drafting for the rest of the class period, with instructions to have a completed draft ready for peer feedback on Monday.

Most students get to work reading and annotating their sources, though some are still locating sources—even though this step was due yesterday. At this point in the semester Ms. Marks knows that some students simply need more time to complete this stage, while others have mismanaged their time. She takes time to talk to each student who is behind, and sets a goal for completion with each. Students who meet the goal will not be penalized, but those who do not meet the goal may suffer a loss of partial credit for the assignment. Others are in the process of composing a first draft. Ms. Marks spends a few minutes circulating the room, checking in with those who are behind and those who have questions.

Explanation

Through this class period the logistics of a writing workshop are further clarified. Students receive necessary information and significant time to write with support from a knowledgeable writer. The structure supporting Ms. Marks' writing workshop elucidates how a teacher might effectively deal with grammar issues. Hillocks (1987) and Graham

and Perin (2007), as well as many before them, have discredited the traditional method of teaching grammar in isolation. Ms. Marks' classroom allows for individualized instruction of grammar concepts within the context of individual students' writings. Individual conferences, as well as feedback during formative assessments made during workshop time provide a way to discuss grammar with those who have a need to do so in a way that is likely to produce positive results in student writing.

Day Five (Friday)

Ms. Marks begins today's class by simply reminding students that they need to be prepared to share a complete draft when they come to class on Monday, though nearly all students were already working when she officially began class. After working her way around the room and checking in with each student, as she typically does, Ms. Marks sits at the table in the corner of the room and calls a student to join her for a conference. She continues to do this until the class is almost over, taking occasional breaks from conferences to circulate around the room and answer student questions.

At the end of the class period, Ms. Marks takes an informal poll of student progress. She asks students to raise a hand, showing a number one through five. Students know that this represents how confident they feel about meeting the next goal—having a complete draft, ready for peer response, by the beginning of class on Monday. A quick survey of hands alerts Ms. Marks that nearly all students are at a four or five confidence level with the task. She notices about four threes and two ones. One of the students displaying a one is a special education student who often needs extra time or additional supports to meet class goals. Ms. Marks makes a mental note to email the special

education teacher to discuss this student's situation and decide which accommodations are needed at this time.

Explanation

Today's class showed that a teacher using a workshop approach to teach writing must be tuned in to student needs. It also demonstrates that a workshop setting can be an effective learning environment for students of varied abilities. Too often, teachers look at instructional recommendations, such as those made in Chapter Three, and discount them because of the wide variety of ability levels in their classes. The structure of Ms. Marks' class allows for the flexibility and individualization necessary to meet each student where is or she is in terms of writing ability and work toward improvement.

Day Six (Monday)

Monday is a peer response day, and as students file in many of them sit at computers to print the two copies of their draft they know will be expected of them. Once the printing is essentially complete, Ms. Marks identifies the response activity. She tells students that they will be participating in Silent Sharing Table today. Students have done this before and know that they need to each place their two copies of their essays, along with an additional blank piece of paper, on the table in the corner of the room. They know that they will read the responses of their peers and use them to inform their revision as they work toward a polished draft. When Ms. Marks first introduced this activity, she used her own writing to show how she made decisions about revision.

Students move to the table and exchange their own two copies for another student's writing. Each student sits back down, and begins reading. After finishing reading the essay, each student makes three written comments about the draft—an overall

reaction, a suggestion for improvement, and a note about something he or she particularly liked about the essay. Most students work on this activity for the remainder of the class period.

Students who do not yet have a completed draft may choose to either participate in the response activity or use the class time to continue drafting. All three students without a complete draft move to computers and begin working. Ms. Marks spends the class period working intensively with each of these students. She reminds them that they will be responsible for getting response to their drafts on their own time and must still meet the deadline for submission. Periodically Ms. Marks checks to see that each student's draft has been responded to by several people. She occasionally shuffles the pile to move essays that have not been read by enough people to the top.

With about ten minutes of class time remaining, Ms. Marks instructs each student to finish the essay, comment, and return it to its author. She distributes those that are still at the table to their owners. As usual, students are anxious to read the response of their peers and flip immediately to the response pages. Before dismissing them, Ms. Marks reminds students that they will have class time tomorrow to continue drafting and that their final drafts will be due at the beginning of class on Wednesday.

Explanation

Day six illustrated one approach to teach students about revision. The peer response activity, one that Ms. Marks learned at a summer institute for teachers (Martin, C., 1988), offers students practice with response to the writing of others. It also allows students guidance for their own revision. Such instruction and practice related to revision is supported by Shanahan (2004), Hink (1985), Shah (1987), Atwell (1998), and

Zemelman and Daniels (1988), as explained in Chapter Three. When Ms. Marks introduced the activity by sharing her own revising process, she provided direct instruction related to revision, using one technique widely supported by successful teachers of writing. When writing teachers are writers themselves and share their own writing experiences with students, they can be more accurate with their instruction. Teachers also are more likely to be credible with students when they share their own writing experiences.

Day Seven (Tuesday)

As students come into class today, they have their drafts and responses from the previous day. They notice a set of writing prompts on the board, so they begin responding. After the free writing, Ms. Marks reminds students of tomorrow's deadline and makes herself available for individual help. Students begin forming a virtual line and begin working. Ms. Marks spends the class period making her way through the virtual line, assisting students as they finalize their essays. As the class period comes to an end, she reminds students to bring a final draft as well as proof of prewriting, drafting, and revision and editing to be handed in for teacher response.

Explanation

This class period highlighted a process approach to teaching writing, as supported by several researchers—Graham and Perin (2007); Fleischman and Unger (2004); Beeres, Probst, and Rief (2007); Nagin (2006); and Zemelman and Daniels (1988). Students have engaged in prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. While some elements have been required of all students, they also have been allowed considerable freedom to hold true to the process that works best for each of them through this extended

writing opportunity, as explained in Chapter Four (p. 39). Teachers should help students learn strategies for writing, build a repertoire, and use that repertoire to inform their work on writing tasks.

Day Eight (Wednesday)

Students come into class, print final drafts, collect various artifacts of process, and submit their work within the first five minutes of class. After making one final call for essays, she gathers the stack and places it on the table in the corner. She immediately transitions the students to their next writing assignment—an email. She believes strongly that students should be provided opportunities to engage in writing for authentic purposes, and crafted this assignment to meet that goal.

Students are instructed to think of a problem they would like to fix. After giving a minute or two of think time, Ms. Marks prompts the students to write about the problem, the solution, and who they'd write to seek a solution. Students write for about five minutes before Ms. Marks stops them and elicits verbal responses from students. One student says he bought a pair of shoes last week, and they are already beginning to fall apart. His idea is to write to the manufacturer and seek a replacement pair. Another student is upset that all school entrances but one are locked, causing him immeasurable inconvenience. He wants to write to the school principal to advocate for more unlocked doors.

Ms. Marks allows two more responses, then introduces the next writing assignment. She explains to the students that they will be crafting an email that addresses a problem and proposes a solution to someone who has the authority to remedy the situation. Students seem excited by the assignment and immediately begin talking to

other students around them about what they will write about. Ms. Marks calls the students back to attention and tells them to begin crafting the email, and to bring a draft to share in class tomorrow. Students spend the rest of the class period writing, while Ms. Marks discusses topics with each student.

Explanation

Day eight introduced the idea of writing for an authentic purpose. Such authentic writing is supported by Graham and Perin (2007), Wiggins (1998), and Daniels and Bizar (1998). In today's society people communicate more and more often through electronic forms, such as email. Furthermore, students are writing to address real life problems they experience, slowing students to learn about and from writing in an authentic way. As supported in Chapter Three, Ms. Marks is allowing her students to engage in writing tasks that have meaning for them right now, not just teaching skills and concepts that are important for the future, such as in adult life, work, and college.

Day Nine (Thursday)

Ms. Marks wants to provide her students with some instruction in and practice with editing today. She selected this assignment for such practice because the content of the writing is not difficult and the assignment is highly engaging for most students. At the beginning of class Ms. Marks asks each student to get out or print his or her draft email. When students are done with this, she explains that one of the common issues developing writers have is using many short, choppy sentences. She projects on the screen a draft email she has composed and demonstrates with her own text. Ms. Marks tries to share her own draft and polished writing as often as possible, believing that doing so encourages her own students to take risks by sharing their writing.

She instructs each student to read through his or her own draft, trying to combine sentences. Students spend approximately five minutes doing this while Ms. Marks circulates, interacting with several students as they work. She stops the students and asks them to share some of their combined sentences with someone sitting nearby. Students do so, then Ms. Marks instructs them to take another look at the sentences and together decide which sentences are better left separate and which sentences are better combined. Students do this, and Ms. Marks elicits some responses to be shared with the large group. She focuses on the decision-making and craft involved in the choice to either combine or leave separate. Ms. Marks ends the period by asking students to complete another draft of their email, paying attention to sentences, and also editing for other conventions issues. She tells the students to bring this new draft to class tomorrow.

Explanation

Students practiced sentence combining today as they engaged in a process approach to the current writing task within Ms. Marks' writing workshop. While all students are required to complete the sentence combining task, it is taught in the context of their won writing—in this case a draft stage email. Since sentence combining is supported in Chapter Three by Graham and Perin (2007), Hillocks (1987), Nagin (2006), Saddler (2007), Zemelman and Daniels (1988), and Lindemann (1995), it is worth considering as an instructional practice. It is important that any sentence combining exercises that occur be viewed as supportive of other instructional techniques, not stand on their own. It is not advisable to teach a unit on isolated sentence-combining, but it is advisable to encourage students to combine sentences in their own writing, based on individual judgments by the writer.

Day Ten (Friday)

Students come to class today with another draft of their emails. Ms. Marks asks students to brainstorm a list of ways an email to be used for formal or business purposes might differ from one used for social purposes. She spends approximately fifteen minutes using student responses to explain the qualities of an email appropriate for business or formal communication. Ms. Marks uses this dialogue to create a model of a high quality business email on the board. Students are instructed to use this model to evaluate their own email. Ms. Marks asks them to provide a written critique of their own email, then make any changes necessary to make it ready to send when they come to class on Monday.

Some students balk at the idea of actually sending the email, but Ms. Marks insists that it is a required part of the assignment—each student must copy her on the sent email. She believes strongly in the idea of writing not only for an authentic purpose, but also for an authentic audience.

Explanation

The final day of this writing workshop has further supported the concept of writing for authentic purposes by having students also write for an authentic audience. Knowing the importance of such authentic writing through the review of research in Chapter Three, Ms. Marks illustrates how such authentic writing can be incorporated in a typical classroom setting. Throughout the two weeks illustrated here, students have engaged in a writing process in a supportive writing workshop that provides them direct and individualized instruction and illustrates how all of the instructional

recommendations in Chapter Three come together to influence a teacher's decision making.

Summary of the Chapter

The two week journey with Tammy Marks' high school composition class illustrates how each of the recommendations can come together to inform the practice of a real teacher with real students. Ms. Marks is an example of a teacher whose practice is influenced by beliefs about teaching, learning, and writing. Though she is by no means perfect, she and her classroom can serve as an example of a reflective practitioner concerned with promising practice.

Conclusion

Few would argue that the ability to write well is anything but an essential life skill. The US Department of Education states:

> "Effective writing skills are important in all stages of life from early education to future employment. In the business world, as well as in school, students must covey complex ideas and information in a clear, succinct manner. Inadequate writing skills, therefore, could inhibit achievement across the curriculum and in future careers, while proficient writing skills help students convey ideas, deliver instructions, analyze information, and motivate others" (As cited in Nagin, 2007, p. 3).

Unfortunately, in spite of the increasing recognition that writing is a necessary life skill, far too many students are leaving American high schools without the writing skills they need.

These graduates enter institutions of higher education without the ability to present and support logical arguments or adhere to the desired conventions of written English. Those who enter the workforce appear to be no better off. Businesses across the nation are investing significant time and money to train workers to write effectively. National Reports, such as "The Neglected R" and "Writing Next" seek to shed light on the problem and offer solutions to address it. The Alliance for Excellent Education sought to call attention to the crisis in its June 2007 Policy Brief, saying that America's adolescents are facing a writing crisis with millions of middle and high school students lacking the writing skills they need to succeed in college and life or compete in the workforce.

To address the need for improved writing, it is imperative that teachers seek to improve adolescent writing instruction. Far too many teachers are using outdated and ineffective pedagogy to teach writing; even more are avoiding the teaching of writing altogether, and this must change. Teachers must be provided with ongoing professional development that allows them to reflect on their own practice, explore current promising practices through varied means, and discuss this new understanding with other professionals.

The complex nature of writing makes this no simple task. Because writing is not a simple, linear process as many mistakenly believe, but rather a thoughtful act of creating and thinking, it presents both instructional difficulties and opportunities. Difficulties arise as teachers seek to meet the individual needs of diverse writers in one classroom. They rise again when teachers try to figure out how to inspire growth in their students and provide meaningful feedback. Fortunately, such opportunities as writing to learn can be flexibly used to facilitate thinking and learning.

The sad reality that we face is that far too many students are receiving substandard writing instruction. The many limitations—time, knowledge, resources—teachers face often make it easier to just avoid teaching writing. However, current research provides insight into promising practices for the teaching of writing to adolescents. The value of writing as a process, instruction and practice in revision, and many more instructional techniques have been proven effective, and teachers can incorporate these instructional strategies to bring about positive change in their own classrooms.

References

About the Iowa Writing Project. (2007). *Iowa Writing Project.* Retrieved 7 May 2007

      from http://www.uni.edu/continuinged/iwp/.

About NCTE. (2007). *The National Council of Teachers of English.* Retrieved 7 May

      2007 from http://www.ncte.org/about.

Aligning Postsecondary Expectations and High School Practice: The Gap Defined.

      (2005-2006). ACT. *The Annual Condition of Education Report*. (2005). Iowa

      Department of Education.

Atwell, N. (1998). *In the Middle: New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and*

      Learning. Boynton-Cook, Portsmouth, NH.

Beers, K., Probst, R.E., and Rief, L. (2007). *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into*

      Practice. Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH.

Brewster, C. and Klump, J. (December 2004). Writing to learn, learning to write:

      Revisiting writing across the curriculum in northwest secondary schools.

      Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. Retrieved 7 May 2007 from

      http://www.nwrel.org/request/2004dec/Writing.pdf

College Board announces scores for new SAT with writing section. (29 August 2006).

      College Board. Retrieved 18 May 2007 from

      http://www.collegeboard.com/press/release/150054.html?print=true

Daniels, H. & Bizar, M. (1998) *Methods that Matter: Six Structures for Best Practice*

      Classrooms. Stenhouse Publishers: Portland, ME.

Fleischman, S. and Unger, J. (2004) Is process writing the "Write Stuff"? *Educational*

      Leadership 62 no2 90-1.

Framing statements on assessment. (2004). *The National Council of Teachers of English.*

    Retrieved 7 May 2007 from

    http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/assess/118875.htm.

Graham, S. & Perin, D. (2007) Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of

    adolescents in middle and high schools. Alliance for Excellence in Education.

Graves, D. H. (1994). *A Fresh Look at Writing.* Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH.

Hillocks, Jr., G. (May 1987). Synthesis of research on teaching writing. *Educational*

    Leadership, 44.8, 73-82.

Martin, C. (1988). Responding to student writing. In J. Davis & J. D. Marshall (Eds.),

    Ways of knowing: Research and practice in the teaching of writing (p. 118). Iowa

    City, IA: Iowa Council of Teachers of English.

Nagin, Carl. (2006). *Because Writing Matters: Improving Student Writing in Our*

    Schools. National Writing Project. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.

The Nation's Report Card. (2002). National Center for Education Statistics.

The Nation's Report Card: Writing Highlights. (2002). National Center for Education

    Statistics. Retrieved 4 May 2007 from the ERIC Database.

About the National Writing Project. (2007). *National Writing Project.* Retrieved 7 May

    2007 from http://www.writingproject.org/About/

NCTE beliefs about the teaching of writing. (2004). NCTE Guideline. Retrieved from:

    http://www.ncte.org/prog/writing/research/118876.htm?source=gs 24 April 2007.

The Neglected "R": The Need for a Writing Revolution. (April 2003). The National

    Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges. Retrieved 1 May 2007

    from the ERIC database.

Newkirk, T. (1993). *Nuts and bolts: A practical guide to teaching college composition.*

Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH.

On grading student writing. (1993). *The National Council of Teachers of English.*

Retrieved 7 May 2007 from

http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/assess/107363.htm?source=gs

Policy brief. (June 2007). Alliance for Excellent Education.

Rising to the challenge: Are high school graduates prepared for college and work? (Feb.

2005). Achieve, Inc. Retrieved 18 May 2007 from

http://www.tomorrowsworkforce.org/ArticleRisingChallenge.pdf

Saddler, B., et. al., Improving sentence writing ability through sentence-combining

practice. *Teaching Exceptional Children* v. 39 no. 3 (January/February 2007) p. 6-

11.

Shah, D. C. (1986). Composing processes and writing instruction at the middle/junior

high school level. *Theory into Practice.* Spring86, Vol. 25 Issue 2, p109-117.

Shanahan, T. (2004). Overcoming the dominance of communication: Writing to think and

learn. In T.L. Jetton & J.A. Dole, (Eds.), *Adolescent literacy research and practice*

(pp.59-74). New York: Guilford Press.

Troia, G. and Graham, S. (2003). Effective writing instruction across the grades: What

every educational consultant should know. *Journal of Educational and*

Psychological Consultation 14(1), 75-89.

Wiggins, G. (1998) Educative assessment: Designing assessments to inform and improve

student performance. United States : Jossey-Bass.

Writing. (2007). *Iowa Model Core Curriculum.* Retrieved 7 May 2007 from

http://www.iowamodelcore.org/content/Literacy/Writing.

Writing initiative. (2007). *The National Council of Teachers of English.* Retrieved 7 May

2007 from http://www.ncte.org/prog/writing

Zemelman, S. & Daniels, H. (1988). *A Community of Writers: Teaching Writingin the*

Junior and Senior High School. Heinemann: Portsmouth, NH.