

Recommendations on Teaching Writing

Increase	Decrease
<p>Student ownership and responsibility such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping students choose their own topics and goals for improvement • using brief teacher-student conferences • teaching students to review their own progress 	<p>Decrease teacher control of decision-making such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher deciding on all writing topics • suggestions for improvement dictated by teacher • learning objectives determined by teacher alone • instruction given as whole-class activity
<p>Class time spent on writing whole, original pieces through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establishing real purposes for writing and students' involvement in the task • instruction in and support for all stages of the writing process • prewriting, drafting, revising, editing 	<p>Decrease time spent on isolated drills on "subskills" of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, paragraphing, penmanship, etc.</p> <p>Decrease writing assignments given briefly, but with no context or purpose, completed in one step</p>
<p>Teacher modeling writing – drafting, revising, sharing – as a fellow author and as demonstration of process</p>	<p>Decrease teacher talk about writing</p>
<p>Learning of grammar and mechanics in context, at the editing stage, and as items are needed.</p>	<p>Decrease isolated grammar lessons, given in order determined by textbook, before writing is begun</p>
<p>Writing for real audiences, publishing for the class and for wider communities</p>	<p>Decrease assignments read only by teachers</p>
<p>Making the classroom a supportive setting for shared learning using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • active exchange and valuing of students' ideas • collaborative small-group work • conferences and peer critiquing that give responsibility for improvement to authors 	<p>Decrease devaluation of students' ideas through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students viewed as lacking knowledge and language abilities • sense of class as competing individuals • work with fellow students viewed as cheating, disruptive
<p>Writing across the curriculum as a tool for learning</p>	<p>Decrease writing taught only during "language arts" period – i.e., infrequently</p>
<p>Constructive and efficient evaluation that involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • brief informal oral response as students work • thorough grading of just a few student-selected, polished pieces • focus on a few errors at a time • cumulative view of growth and self-evaluation • encouragement of risk taking and honest expression 	<p>Decrease evaluation as negative burden for teacher and student such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marking all papers heavily for all errors, making teacher a bottleneck • teacher editing paper and, only after completed, rather than student making improvements • grading seen as punitive, focused on errors, not growth