

## Writing Teaching Strategies

Traditionally, most writing instruction has focused on mechanics, probably because it is easier to teach grammar, punctuation, and spelling than it is to teach content development and creative style. Recent efforts to teach the writing process have led to improvement in content development with some occasional loss in grammatical abilities. The latter likely occurs when teachers neglect the final stage(s) of the writing process which focus on proofreading. Only a comprehensive approach to writing instruction will result in significant improvement of writing skills. Some activities that will develop strong writing practices are:

- ▶ Read both narrative and expository texts in all content areas. Expose your students to many different types of genre. Reading is the mirror process of writing, so the more reading students do, the more likely they are to write well.
- ▶ Discuss different text structures (expository) and story grammar (narrative).
- ▶ Discuss character development and character traits in stories read.
- ▶ Discuss alternate story endings and beginnings and possible sequels and prequels.
- ▶ Discuss author's technique and use of vocabulary.
- ▶ Provide opportunities to use new vocabulary in all writing assignments.
- ▶ Create writing activities where students can meaningfully relate what they know.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for discussion about different topics, both personal and content-related.
- ▶ Provide viewing opportunities (of photos, art, videos, graphs, and charts, etc.) as a springboard for discussion and writing.
- ▶ Provide numerous opportunities for writing throughout the classroom day.
- ▶ Vary the different kinds of writing activities used daily in your classroom. For example, use writing journals, learning logs, short and long essays, etc.
- ▶ Begin the school year by asking students to write shorter, less complex texts and gradually build to longer and more complex types of writing.
- ▶ Utilize brainstorming techniques (e.g., graphic organizers, T-Charts, outlines, etc.).
- ▶ Encourage peer and group collaboration during brainstorming activities, planning story grammar and text structure, vocabulary and character discussion.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for students to discuss their writing and to receive feedback from you and peers.
- ▶ Use Author's Chair and Poet's Chair. Model appropriate feedback to students.
- ▶ Have students utilize checklists and rubrics for peer and self-evaluation.
- ▶ Conference with students to discuss writing strengths and needs.
- ▶ Utilize the "writing process" approach for works intended to be "published."
- ▶ Have students create their own writing tasks.