

Best Practices in Teaching Writing

- ❑ **Positive Atmosphere**
 - Inviting classroom
 - Respect for students, their idea, backgrounds, interests
 - Teacher shares his/her writing
 - Expectations, procedures, and routines are established
- ❑ **Organize for Writing**
 - Writing Workshop: Mini lesson, guided writing, sharing
 - Writing notebooks are used to store ideas, progress notes, writing resources, etc.
- ❑ **Meaningful Writing Opportunities**
 - Student choice and ownership
 - Students write for "real" reasons (i.e. pamphlets for the office)
 - Student work is published (wall, website, letters, etc.)
- ❑ **Reading and Writing Connection**
 - Reading is used as a model for writing.
 - Discussion about how authors utilize writing techniques.
 - Teachers encourage students to apply the techniques and characteristics of materials they read in their own writing.
- ❑ **Writing Across the Content Areas/Writing-to-Learn Opportunities**
 - Learning logs
 - Response journals
 - Quick Writes
 - Demonstrate Learning: essays, reports, responses to prompts
- ❑ **Constructive Response to Writing**
 - Emphasis is on developing the writer, not "fixing" the piece of writing.
 - Teachers use observation, conversation, and review of writing samples to determine what support students need.
 - Constructive response happens during different phases of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, and reflecting stage).
 - A variety of techniques are used for response: conferences, written notes, peer conferencing (pairs or small group), response forms, whole-class response, and self-response.
- ❑ **Collaboration**
 - Students collaborate as writers, thinkers, and learners.
 - Teacher models effective ways to collaborate.
 - Occurs throughout the writing process.
- ❑ **Mini Lessons**
 - Short, 5-10 minute lesson focusing on skills and strategies in the curriculum.
 - Teachers plan mini lessons based on student need.
 - The skill and strategy is applied right away in the students' writing.

Adapted from "Best Practices in Teaching Writing" by Charles Whitaker, Ph.D.