

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON TEACHING WRITING

### Increase

- Student ownership and responsibility by:
- helping students choose their own topics and goals for improvement
  - using brief teacher-student conferences
  - teaching students to review their own progress
- Class time spent on writing whole, original pieces through:
- establishing real purposes for writing and students' involvement in the task
  - instruction in and support for all stages of writing process
  - prewriting, drafting, revising, editing
- Teacher modeling writing—drafting, revising, sharing—as a fellow author and as demonstration of processes
- Learning of grammar and mechanics in context, at the editing stage, and as items are needed
- Writing for real audiences, publishing for the class and for wider communities
- Making the classroom a supportive setting for shared learning, using:
- active exchange and valuing of students' ideas
  - collaborative small-group work
  - conferences and peer critiquing that give responsibility for improvement to authors
- Writing across the curriculum as a tool for learning
- Constructive and efficient evaluation that involves:
- brief informal oral responses as students work
  - thorough grading of just a few of 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

### Decrease

- Teacher control of decision making by:
- teacher deciding on all writing topics
  - suggestions for improvement dictated by teacher
  - learning objectives determined by teacher alone
  - instruction given as whole-class activity
- Time spent on isolated drills on “subskills” of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, paragraphing, penmanship, etc.
- Writing assignments given briefly, with no context or purpose, completed in one step
- Teacher talks about writing but never writes or shares own work
- Isolated grammar lessons, given in order determined by textbook, before writing is begun
- Assignments read only by teacher
- Devaluation of students' ideas through:
- students viewed as lacking knowledge and language abilities
  - sense of class as competing individuals
  - work with fellow students viewed as cheating, disruptive
- Writing taught only during “language arts” period—i.e., infrequently
- Evaluation as negative burden for teacher and student by:
- 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

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Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., Hyde, A. A., & Varner, W. (1998). *Best practice: New standards for teaching and learning in America's schools* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON TEACHING READING

Increase	Decrease
Reading aloud to students	Exclusive emphasis on whole-class or reading-group activities
Time for independent reading	Teacher selection of all reading materials for individuals and groups
Children's choice of their own reading materials	Relying on selections in basal reader
Exposing children to a wide and rich range of literature	Teacher keeping his/her own reading tastes and habits private
Teacher modeling and discussing his/her own reading processes	Primary instructional emphasis on reading subskills such as phonics, word analysis, syllabication
Primary instructional emphasis on comprehension	Teaching reading as a single, one-step act
Teaching reading as a process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Use strategies that activate prior knowledge</li><li>Help students make and test predictions</li><li>Structure help during reading</li><li>Provide after-reading applications</li></ul>	
Social, collaborative activities with much discussion and interaction	Solitary seatwork
Grouping by interests or book choices	Grouping by reading level
Silent reading followed by discussion	Round-robin oral reading
Teaching skills in the context of whole and meaningful literature	Teaching isolated skills in phonics workbooks or drills
Writing before and after reading	Little or no chance to write
Encouraging invented spelling in children's early writings	Punishing preconventional spelling in students' early writings
Use of reading in content fields (e.g., historical novels in social studies)	Segregation of reading to reading time
Evaluation that focuses on holistic, higher-order thinking processes	Evaluation focus on individual, low-level subskills
Measuring success of reading program by students' reading habits, attitudes, and comprehension	Measuring the success of the reading program only by test scores

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