Literacy: It All Connects

Best Practice in Teaching Writing
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Best Practice in Teaching Writing

The writers' workshop is exactly what Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (1993) identified as a best practice in writing. The writers' workshop can help improve students' writing in the following ways:

Increase student ownership and responsibility by:
• helping students choose their own topics and goals
• using brief teacher-student conferences
• teaching students to review their own progress

Increase 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
• pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing

Increase teachers' modeling writing-drafting, revising, sharing-as a fellow author, and as demonstrator of processes

Increase the learning of grammar and mechanics in context, at the editing stage, and as items are needed

Increase writing for a real audience; publishing for the class and outside communities

Increase the use of the classroom as a supportive setting for shared learning through:
• active exchange and valuing of students' ideas
• collaborative small group work
• conferences and peer critiquing that give responsibility for improvement to authors

Increase writing across the curriculum as a tool for learning

Increase constructive and efficient evaluation that involves:
• brief informal responses 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

The writers' workshop is an important part of literacy at both Kendall Demonstration Elementary School and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf.

The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center is comprised of two federally mandated demonstration schools for students from birth through age 21 who are deaf. Located on the campus of Gallaudet University, these schools work in collaboration with a national network of exemplary programs and professionals to identify, research, develop, evaluate, and disseminate innovative curricula, materials, educational strategies, and technologies for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Clerc Center also provides training and technical assistance to families and programs throughout the United States, and serves as a model individualized educational program, working in close partnership with its students and their families.

Working for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children Throughout the United States