

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.

Recommendations on Teaching Writing

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.

Recommendations on Teaching Reading

Increase

- Reading aloud to students.
- Time for independent reading.
- Children's choice of their own reading materials.
- Exposing children to a wide and rich range of literature.
- Teacher modeling and discussing his/her own reading processes.
- Primary instructional emphasis on comprehension.
- Teaching reading as a process:
 - Use strategies that activate prior knowledge.
 - Help students make and test predictions.
 - Structure help during reading.
 - Provide after-reading applications.
- Social, collaborative activities with much discussion and interaction.
- Grouping by interests or book choices.
- Silent reading followed by discussion.
- Teaching skills in the context of whole and meaningful literature.
- Writing before and after reading.
- Encouraging invented spelling in children's early writings.
- Use of reading in content fields (e.g., historical novels in social studies).
- Evaluation that focuses on holistic, higher-order thinking processes.
- Measuring success of reading program by students' reading habits, attitudes, and comprehension.

Recommendations on Teaching Reading

Decrease

- Exclusive emphasis on whole-class or reading-group activities.
- Teacher selection of all reading materials for individuals and groups.
- Relying on selections in basal reader.
- Teacher keeping his/her own reading tastes and habits private.
- Primary instructional emphasis on reading subskills, such as phonics. word analysis syllabication.
- Teaching reading as a single. one-step act.
- Solitary seatwork.
- Grouping by reading level.
- Round-robin oral reading.
- Teaching isolated skills in phonics workbooks or drills.
- Little or no chance to write.
- Punishing preconventional spelling in students' early writings.
- Segregation of reading to reading time.
- Evaluation focus on individual, low-level subskills.
- Measuring the success of the reading program only by test scores.

Zemelman, Steven; Daniels, Harvey; and Hyde, Arthur. *Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*. (2nd edition). Hienemann, 1998.