

Research and Knowledge Base for the CWP Model and Programs

BECAUSE WRITING MATTERS: IMPROVING STUDENT WRITING IN OUR SCHOOLS

Because Writing Matters: Improving Student Writing in Our School, describes the current state of writing instruction, examines what research has shown about effective teaching strategies, and affirms that writing must be a central focus in all classrooms if schools are to improve student performance.

From curriculum to assessment to professional development, this book will provide teachers, parents, administrators, and policy-makers the research and knowledge base that underpin writing project programs as well as a blueprint for improving writing in their schools.

Current Research on the Teaching of Writing

- Improving writing is crucial to learning in all subject areas, not just English.
- Writing instruction should begin in the earliest grades.
- Reading and writing are reinforcing literacy skills and need to be taught together.
- Learning to write requires frequent, supportive practice.
- Students have diverse abilities and instructional needs, and so teachers must use multiple strategies to improve students' writing.
- Effective writing instruction pays attention to both the product and processes of writing.
- Writing should be taught in school much as it is practiced by professional writers: that is, students should write for authentic purposes to real audiences.
- Students face ongoing challenges in their writing development and need practice with diverse writing tasks to improve.
- Simply assigning more writing is not enough; teachers must teach students such skills as how to organize thoughts, develop ideas, and revise for clarity.
- An effective writing assignment does more than ask students to report what they have read or experienced. It engages students in such processes as problem solving, reflecting, analyzing, and imagining so that they can think critically about what they have read or experienced.
- Schools cannot improve writing without teachers and administrators who value, understand, and practice writing themselves.
- Teachers and schools need to develop common expectations for good writing across grade levels and subject areas.
- Schools and districts need to develop fair and authentic writing assessments that are aligned with high standards and reflect student progress beyond single-test evaluations.
- Effective school-wide writing programs involve the entire faculty and are developed across the curriculum.
- Schools and districts need to offer professional development opportunities in teaching writing to all faculty.

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Improving Student Writing in Our Schools



For excerpts and further information, visit the NWP website at www.writingproject.org.