

Chapter 1 : 5 Steps to Individualize Writing Instruction

Abstract. This chapter focuses on the different approaches to writing instruction that teachers use in elementary classrooms. It includes an overview of each approach, a description of how each is implemented, an explanation of how each has been critiqued, and research evidence about each approach's effectiveness.

Regular and predictable timetabling of the writing workshop is recommended so that students can anticipate, prepare and plan for their writing. Calkins, The writing workshop is designed to offer a simple and predictable learning environment. Ideally it should occur daily for 50 to 60 minutes. Mini-lessons are short and focussed of approximately 10 minutes. The teacher seeks to inspire and instruct the students as writers. A mini-lesson might focus on something the students are struggling with, and introduce strategies that the students can employ in their own writing. The teacher ends the mini-lesson by asking the students to apply what they have learnt in the mini-lesson to their on-going work. Work time writing and conferring: Students work independently on their written pieces. Different structures and supports are in place to ensure students get support from their teacher or peers. The teacher moves around the room enabling students to showcase successes in their writing and receive assistance on areas that trouble or challenge them. Calkins advises teachers that conference outcomes should lead to tangible strategies students can employ in future writing. Guided or group student-teacher conferences: The teacher might gather small groups of students who have a similar need and provide additional instruction and support. Peer conferring, response groups, sharing sessions: Here, the focus is on the classroom being a community of writers. As part of the writing workshop, students need the opportunity to: At the end of the workshop, the teacher ensures there is time to capture the work of the day, reminding the students of what they have learnt as writers. These occur throughout the year-often at the end of a teaching and learning cycle. They may replace the regular daily workshop as outlined above. On some of these occasions, the wider classroom community family members, caregivers, grandparents, etc. The teacher needs to scaffold and model the entire writing process, so engaging in acts of writing by the teacher helps facilitate this: Specifically, teachers need to think about the focussed, explicit teaching they can offer to the whole class, to small groups and to individuals. Some of these instructional approaches modelled writing, shared writing, interactive writing are focussed on elsewhere in this toolkit and these can be deployed strategically to support students as they move through the process from planning to publication. Theory to practice Calkins and Ehrenworth outline key principles which inform the Writing Workshop approach: Ideas for developing a seed include: The generation of ideas is only the beginning. The entries can be any of a variety of ideas. The most common are: Children write best about the things that are important to them and what they are interested in. It is writing that comes from what they know and what they have experienced. It supports the work of publishing. What might start off as a small undeveloped idea has the potential to be developed into something fully formed. Students need daily sustained periods of time to write. Assessing how the students are using the notebook might include: The art of teaching writing. A curricular plan for the writing workshop: Leadership decisions to raise the level of writing across a school and a District. The Reading Teacher, 70 1 , 7

Chapter 2 : The writing workshop

In terms of approaches to writing instruction that focus on the writer, Watts () recognized that writing process was an important advance because it shifted teachers' attention to during-writing interventions, as.

Reflecting Back and Looking Forward: In this Retrospective, we revisit our College Composition and Communication article in order to clarify our primary argument, address some questions and critiques that have arisen, and consider anew the value of composition courses that study writing. We review our core argument that engaging students with the research and ideas of writing studies, building declarative and procedural knowledge of writing, improves learning transfer. We clarify the distinction between this broad underlying goal and our personal approaches to accomplishing it, emphasizing the diversity of approaches that have come to embody the study of writing in first-year composition. While maintaining that writing studies lacks recognition of itself as a field and of the value of its specialized knowledge to writing instruction, we revise our original argument to show how writing instructors from other fields and with other expertise can build familiarity with writing studies research without extensive, specialized study. In , we published an article in College Composition and Communication CCC that said, in essence, that writing studies is a field with declarative knowledge, and we need to be directly teaching that knowledge in our first-year composition courses. In addition, a course that teaches writing studies content requires prepared and trained teachers' preparation and training that cannot be demanded of low-paid, disrespected, last-minute hires. In short, a course that teaches writing studies content should improve awareness of what the field is and does, and increase the professionalized standing of those who teach in it, raising the likelihood of improved student learning outcomes. There are also a few things we said then that we now believe were misjudgments, not sufficiently well argued, or just wrong, and we will revisit those, too. Our central argument in was this: So here we want to be much more direct, and to use language we did not then possess, in order to better describe what we were arguing for. Rather, we believed then and now that our field has particular research- and theory-based views of writing, how it works and gets accomplished. Some of that research and theory can and should be taught to undergraduates in gen-ed writing courses, and learning about writing in this way has a positive impact for student writers. Put another way, we see our field as having both declarative and procedural knowledge about writing that can and should be conveyed directly to students, so that they are empowered by knowing about the nature and workings of the activity itself and can act from their knowledge instead of having writing done to them. Many times students are given writing assignments that ask them to do something like write a memoir or a report. They are given instructions for how to do this, and then they are given examples of what such texts look like. Yet we know as a field that the writing tasks they are being given are flexible genres that serve various purposes in various contexts, and they change to meet the needs of particular discourse communities or activity systems. So why not help students understand those things in a deep way as they engage in a writing task, so that when they encounter situations later that might call for reports or memoirs, they have tools for understanding why these texts exist and when and how they might be more malleable than they at first appear? In other words, why not give students the same frameworks for analysis and the same access to research about how texts work that we have? Why are we teaching if we are from our research without sharing that research itself with our students? Why not ask them to engage it and respond to it themselves, as empowered agents? What we did not say very clearly was that writing studies as an interdisciplinary field has some work to do in determining, first, what our core knowledge is and, next, what part of that knowledge is relevant for all students in a gen-ed course, and then what additional core knowledge is better saved for upper-level students in writing minors and majors—or even for graduate studies. While we believe writing studies has threshold concepts, they have not so far been named explicitly. We think, for example, that situatedness is a threshold concept: We argued this in different terms in our article when we said that conceptions of writing matter. He became empowered and gained agency as a writer. In the wake of our article, other classrooms and programs across the country have also been making de facto choices. We all need to join the conversation on this question: Since we meant to argue for general outcomes and did

not imagine ourselves advocating for the whole field either a fixed set of disciplinary knowledge or a fixed curriculum for teaching it, some of what has transpired since has puzzled us. Our own senses of what might be taught and how to teach it change every time we step into the classroom, and they changed quite a lot as we wrote our textbook. What part of writing studies knowledge a writing course means to teach, and how, can and probably should vary widely, contingent on student population and instructor expertise. What we advocate for, and what remains stable in our own classrooms, is simply the underlying set of principles: That seems to us the heart of writing-about-writing: This belief seems to be shared more broadly and stated more explicitly these days, including by scholars much more experienced than we. If we accept this basic tenet, and determine what threshold concepts to teach in composition, then the remaining question is: Whatever strategies those might be, use them. We both happen to find that having students read about and engage with empirical research can be particularly productive in bringing ideas and concepts to life, and encouraging transferable knowledge-making. They find other effective means for teaching the concepts, as they should. Here, then, is a current manifesto: Writing studies is a field with content that should be taught to students, and there are myriad pedagogical strategies for teaching this content. This is not some specialized or niche or boutique approach to composition; it is simply an acknowledgement that we are a field and we know things and should teach them. Just like every other field. Staffing writing-about-writing courses remains no less tricky a question now than it was in We did not then, and do not now, believe that writing-about-writing pedagogies are an attempt to seek status for the sake of status, as opposed to seeking status toward the end of better writing instruction. Our goal has always been to improve writing instruction. But we have also come to see that this problem can be understood as a strength, under the right circumstances. People who work with texts and are familiar with genres and conventions in a variety of disciplines, professions, and civic pursuits bring an abundance of expertise to the table as writing teachers, but they can do so more effectively if they are directly familiar with some of the research about writing. At the University of Central Florida UCF , for example, we were given an infusion of money to convert adjunct lines to full-time instructor lines as well as hire some tenure-line faculty in writing studies. Clearly the 18 or so instructors we needed to hire could not all come from writing studies in fact only a few actually have. But we were able to recruit and hire enthusiastic, smart teachers willing to read and learn and try new things. Although this approach is not without its drawbacks, it has overall been quite successful, and the varied backgrounds of our teachers bring a depth and richness to our program that we would not have had otherwise. We still want to press that point. Writing students are better served by being exposed to the knowledge-making that writing studies has engaged in during the past 50 years: What our argument failed to account for, due to our own inexperience, was instructor professionalism and open-mindedness. We have been learning during the past five years how possible it is to invite willing faculty members to learn about writing studies research while bringing their own expertise to bear at the same time. Now, if instructors simply want to keep teaching literature and insist that writing studies does not have disciplinary knowledge that they could benefit from, then our earlier statement holds: A Community of Teachers and Researchers The most direct consequence of our article so far appears to be how it gave language, voice, and community to principles of teaching that had been happening in various places for a long time but in fairly isolated ways. It seems that we were able to structure the problem and embody the pedagogical principles we were forwarding such as providing radical transparency, giving students voice, and taking writing studies seriously in a way that allowed it to come to print and strike a chord with many readers. The strong response to the article was a surprise to us. Many people responded that they had been teaching this way for a long time and were pleased to find they were not alone. Many others responded that they would like to try it and asked if we could supply ideas for texts, assignments, and syllabi. We did not, however, see a lock-step response in which interested readers went out and did what we did. Most readers seemed to latch onto the basic argumentâ€”teach the knowledge of our fieldâ€”and run with it. Writing programs in various institutions around the country are experimenting with whole-program deployment of writing courses about writing. What we are not finding is one of the direst predictions of critics of the about-writing writing course: In fact, we often find our students to have significantly greater enthusiasm, excitement, engagement, and investment with this focus once they understand what it means: This may also be because courses about

writing seem better able to create genuine rhetorical situations within a concrete activity system inquiry into writing , thus seeming less put-on than the typical course. Where to go from here? We continue to conduct research on the effects of making writing the studied object of writing courses; we continue to try different ways of teaching different knowledge in our own courses; we continue enthusiastically to assist individual instructors and WPAs thinking about bringing writing-studies courses to their own programs. But we hope that the primary result of our article is that it will push the field toward more clearly and explicitly naming its knowledge and expertise, and that this work will improve writing programs and courses of all kinds. Ours are just two of many voices in this ongoing endeavor—what we hope will be a clearer embracing of who we are as writing studies professionals, and what our field has to offer to national discussions of issues of writing instruction, assessment, testing, and policy.

Works Cited Adler-Kassner, Linda. *Strategies and Tactics in Challenging Times*. Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference. Bergmann, Linda, and Janet Zepernick. *Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: Reimagining the Nature of FYC: Trends in Writing-about-Writing Pedagogies. Sites, Issues, and Perspectives* Ed. Kelly Ritter and Paul Kei Matsuda. Utah State UP, *Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge: Overcoming Barriers to Student Understanding: Threshold Concepts and Troublesome Knowledge*. Jan Meyer and Ray Land. Wardle, Elizabeth, and Doug Downs. *Reflecting Back and Looking Forward from*.

Chapter 3 : CF Reflecting Back and Looking Forward by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs

Approaches to Writing Instruction for Adolescent English Language Learners A DISCUSSION OF RECENT RESEARCH AND PRACTICE LITERATURE IN RELATION TO NATIONWIDE STANDARDS.

They might not have learned how to recognize effective writing because it can be subjective, how to give effective feedback, or how to balance whole-group and individualized instruction. It also seems that students are doing less long-form writing than ever before. As two educators who have specialized in both special and general education at different points in our careers, we know that instructional strategies work for some students and not for others, even those with similar disabilities or those who are in the same grade level or classroom. Although it may seem like good practice to teach all students the same writing skill simultaneously, the fact remains that students will always be at different levels of mastery. Teachers can follow these steps to individualize writing instruction for all students: Use instructional strategies designed to improve specific areas of writing. One of our favorites is showing students how to edit irrelevant information. They use a checklist that asks them to delete unnecessary words and sentences that do not relate to the topic. Another strategy is the "rich language generator," by which students master descriptive language. Students consider aspects of the object they are describing, such as its feature, what the object resembles, and its human-like qualities. Then they string the features together into one descriptive sentence. Alternatively, teachers can create instructional strategies that help students develop the traits that are not apparent in their writing. Make sure students write daily across content areas. Students should not perceive writing to be a monotonous assignment done only during writing time. Instead, teachers should plan for writing assignments that are meaningful to students, such as writing about a popular movie, song, video game, or trend; writing about a current event that affects their age group; or writing about news or an event in their community. Teachers can also survey students to determine topics they want to write about and work to connect those topics to the content areas. Our colleague Helen Vassiliou, a teacher in Ohio, has found that one of her most popular writing assignments allows students to research a person they hold in high regard and write a journal entry pretending to be that person. This project can cover a wide variety of content areas depending on the person they choose, including history, social studies, science, and math. Remember that visuals, such as photographs and videos, can be valuable tools. Vassiliou uses visuals as a nonthreatening way of motivating students to start the writing process, especially for learners who need added support to understand text. Differentiate this strategy by having students write a caption, a dialogue, a word list, or questions about what they see. For those who need more structure, provide guiding questions in four columns: What do you notice first? What is the physical setting? What can you learn from examining this image? What do you wonder about? What do you now know about the image after examining it? Use graphic organizers on a regular basis. Visual displays of the relationships between concepts and ideas prompt students to document their thinking. She asks students to write a word or phrase that shows what they know about an assigned topic. This exercise gets thoughts flowing and generates a vocabulary bank students can pull from in later drafts. This approach can help guard against any biases teachers may have toward students—either being too lenient on those they like or being too critical of those with challenging behaviors. Learning to write can be tough, but teaching writing might be tougher. These steps can help teachers reach out to students who continue to struggle with writing. Copyright by ASCD. Ideas from the Field Subscribe to ASCD Express, our free e-mail newsletter, to have practical, actionable strategies and information delivered to your e-mail inbox twice a month. Learn more about our permissions policy and submit your request online.