

Best Practices in

Writing Workshop Instruction for Elementary Literacy Teachers

Big Ideas	Developing	Effective	Highly Effective
<p>Establishes predictable Writing Workshop structure</p>	<p>Teacher frequently implements Writing Workshop components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned mini-lesson based on DPS writing cycles. Independent work time where students write independently. Student conferences. Sharing time for closure at end of workshop. 	<p>Teacher regularly implements Writing Workshop components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned 15–20-minute mini-lesson based on DPS writing cycles and students’ needs as determined by observation. Independent work time for an extended period where students write independently. Individual conferences or small writing groups. Sharing time where students share their writing or what they learned during Writing Workshop. 	<p>Teacher routinely implements 60-minute Writing Workshop components, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned, focused, 15–20-minute mini-lessons appropriate for supporting student understanding of elements and strategies for specific writing genres. Lessons are organized by writing cycles and include studying touchstone texts and student work and developing rubrics with class. Lessons give students clear expectations and information to improve their writing. Independent work time that gives students opportunities to write with clear intentions and purposes and try strategies and skills presented in the mini-lessons (if appropriate for their writing that day). Students write independently or discuss their writing with writing partners or in response groups. Individual conferences or small writing groups that focus on the intended learning from the mini-lesson or students’ needs. Sharing time where selected students share their writing and experiences with trying writing strategies related to the mini-lesson. Teacher selects students who will share to provide role models, but all students have an opportunity to share at some point.
<p>Sets up rich, literate classroom environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students use appropriate materials for writing. Some charts and rubrics, generally teacher-developed, are posted or accessible. Classrooms and hallways display some student work. Classroom has an appropriate space used for whole group gathering and space for students to work independently and with partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students engage in the writing process and share their writing with classmates. Teacher and students refer to class-developed charts and rubrics that are posted or accessible. Classrooms and hallways frequently display student writing. Displays reflect most recent writing instruction. Classroom libraries incorporate student books. Classroom arrangement reflects mix of teacher- and student-directed interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students participate in a writing community in which they actively engage in the writing process and support classmates’ efforts. Productive, accountable talk is evident as students work with writing partners and in response groups to improve their writing. Students refer to a variety of class-developed resources when writing, including attribute charts, rubrics, word walls, and editing checklists. Teacher and students often refer to relevant, easy-to-read displays during discussions. Students can easily access writing examples from different genres by published authors and students. To clarify expectations, class-developed rubrics include published author and student writing examples. Classrooms, hallways, and classroom libraries routinely display student writing in meaningful ways to provide literacy opportunities, celebrate students’ accomplishments, and reflect big ideas of each writing cycle. Regularly changing displays reflect current learning. Classroom arrangement accommodates a variety of student groupings.

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<p>Develops student independence and sense of community</p>	<p>Some rituals and routines have been discussed, and students occasionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage their behavior with significant teacher support. • Follow directions as to what to do next. • Know how to care for resources. • Move around the room with teacher permission. 	<p>Rituals and routines are established, and students frequently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage their behavior with some teacher support. • Know what is expected of them during work time. • Maintain resources respectfully. • Work well with writing partners for short periods. • Move around the room to locate resources during a time teacher determines. 	<p>Rituals and routines are firmly established, and students routinely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the “why” behind rituals and routines and take responsibility for maintaining them. • Manage their behavior independently. • Know what to do when they write and when they finish a writing piece, then do it. • Understand how to move through the writing process. • Maintain resources respectfully. • Work well with writing partners and in small response groups, listening and responding appropriately. • Move around the room without disruption to locate resources and confer with writing partners.
<p>Provides effective whole group instruction in mini-lessons</p>	<p>Teacher frequently does mini-lessons, mainly using district units from the Web site, Lucy McCormick Calkins' <i>Units of Study for Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum</i>, or JoAnn Portalupi and Ralph Fletcher's <i>Teaching the Qualities of Writing</i>.</p>	<p>Teacher makes some decisions about which mini-lessons to use from district resources (Lucy McCormick Calkins' <i>Units of Study for Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum</i>, JoAnn Portalupi and Ralph Fletcher's <i>Teaching the Qualities of Writing</i>, Lisa Cleaveland and Katie Wood Ray's <i>About the Authors: Writing Workshop with Our Youngest Writers</i>, and/or Judy Davis and Sharon Hill's <i>The No-Nonsense Guide to Teaching Writing: Strategies, Structures, and Solutions</i>).</p> <p>Unit pacing is based on district recommendations and some observation of students' needs.</p>	<p>Daily mini-lessons are related and part of a coordinated instructional focus, based on standards, writing cycles (using district curricular materials), and assessed students' needs. Teacher shelters mini-lessons to support English-language learners and presents strategies and genres in a variety of ways, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating writing in front of students. • Composing writing together with students. • Using touchstone texts or teacher or student writing to demonstrate a specific strategy. • Using teacher or student writing with rubrics to analyze writing elements and strategies.

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<p>Individualizes student instruction during conferences and small writing groups</p>	<p>Teacher meets individual students occasionally to help them apply information from the day's mini-lesson.</p>	<p>Writing conferences include some of the following activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading student writing and/or asking questions about writing content or process. • Assisting students in applying information from previous mini-lessons. • Assessing student writing to determine future instructional goals. 	<p>Writing conferences raise students' writing levels by altering how students write after conferences. During frequent writing conferences, teacher:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reads some of students' own writing and ask questions that encourage students to talk about their writing process. • Based on students' questions and interests, decides what to teach or what to reinforce from recent mini-lessons. • Helps students reflect on their writing by talking with them about their writing process and setting goals for next steps. • Links conferences to students' independent writing and reading. • Reinforces one strategy or one concept clearly by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting students in using information from other mini-lessons. • Connecting students to writing mentors. • Providing guided practice, so students can try the focused strategy with teacher assistance.
<p>Uses writing artifacts effectively, including writers notebooks, writing files and folders, editing checklists, and touchstone texts</p>	<p>Writers Notebooks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have writers notebooks or writing files for independent writing. <p>Writing Files and Folders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have somewhere to keep finished work. <p>Editing Checklists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on spelling and punctuation may be posted or given to students. <p>Touchstone Texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some touchstone texts are available. 	<p>Writers Notebooks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use writers notebooks to try out mini-lesson strategies. <p>Writing Files and Folders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have writing files and/or folders for in-progress and finished work. <p>Editing Checklists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have editing rules and/or checklists, but may use inconsistently or over-emphasize. <p>Touchstone Texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are encouraged to use touchstone texts whenever they like. 	<p>Writers Notebooks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write frequently in writers notebooks to record things they notice, observe, and think about; try new strategies; or rework previously written pieces. <p>Writing Files and Folders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students have a system to organize their writing that allows them easy access to work-in-progress and storage for completed pieces they may revisit. <p>Editing Checklists and Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students use editing checklists as they reread their work to check list items and make appropriate changes. <p>Touchstone Texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students often refer to touchstone texts to anchor themselves to authors and text they enjoy. • Highlighted sections of touchstone texts and examples of teacher and student writing are available as a reference to support students during Writing Workshop.

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<p>Uses assessment and documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher may keep some notes from some conferences. Some rubrics are posted, and some students may use them to self-assess. Students sometimes publish their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher tracks student conferences. Teacher and students build attribute charts and rubrics for different writing genres, which students use to self-assess. Students publish some of their work and sometimes write reflections on what they learned. Teacher may use the narrative Status of the Class to assess students' narrative writing progress from beginning to end of year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher maintains a system that tracks conferences, what was discussed, and what students have been working on and uses this system to inform mini-lessons and small group instruction. Teacher and students create writing goals together. Teacher and students build attribute charts and rubrics together for each writing genre that inform students' writing assessment, revision, and goal setting for future writing. Teacher posts student writing samples and rubrics to demonstrate rubric components. Teacher uses rubrics from <i>Using Rubrics to Improve Student Writing</i> as a base for classroom rubrics. As part of publishing and celebrating their writing, students write reflections of what they learned and respond to other students on their writing. Students take ownership in their process of becoming proficient writers. Teacher uses the narrative Status of the Class to assess students' narrative writing progress from beginning to end of year.
<p>Works to meet ALL students' needs during Writing Workshop (e.g., ELL, special education, gifted and talented)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lessons are aimed at most students' listening comprehension levels. Teacher sometimes has students turn and talk. Teacher builds on students' background knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lessons and touchstone texts are aimed at most students' listening comprehension levels. Teacher uses SIOP techniques, including using visuals and/or realia and gestures, for students who will be challenged by mini-lesson materials. Teacher builds on students' background experiences and concept knowledge. Teacher has students turn and talk during mini-lessons and sometimes work together during writing time to offer more support and give opportunities for oral language practice. Teacher encourages students to talk about what they are going to write and rehearse their story orally before writing. Charts and rubrics sometimes have icons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini-lessons and touchstone texts are aimed at most students' listening comprehension levels. While giving the mini-lesson, teacher uses SIOP techniques, including using visuals and/or realia, gesturing and acting out, having students repeat in their own words what they are to do, prompting students appropriately to respond at their language proficiency levels, and/or extending their language. Teacher builds on students' strengths and connects to their background experiences and literacy knowledge in their first language. Teacher offers students frequent, multiple opportunities to interact with one another and use oral language purposefully during whole group, small group, and independent time, such as turn and talk, oral rehearsal of stories before writing, and/or responding to each other's writing. All charts and rubrics are written with student input and in child-friendly language with visuals or icons to support meaning. Teacher encourages students to publish their writing in a variety of ways.