

Overarching Writing Instruction Best Practices

Summary: There is an immense amount of information out there about how to teach writing. What are the most important and impactful principles for teaching writing effectively? In an article for *The Reading Teacher*, two researchers interviewed leading experts in the field to draw from decades of research on the subject.

Practical Applications

The authors found several overarching principles:

- “Effective writing instructors recognize the impact of their own writing beliefs, experiences, and practices” – in other words, the more a teacher actually takes time to write, and the more aware he or she is of the processes that go into that writing, the better they will be able to convey writing instruction.
- “Effective writing instruction encourages student motivation and engagement” – if teachers don’t take the time to build students’ interest through authentic writing projects, setting a writing-friendly atmosphere, etc., the rest of instruction becomes far less effective.
- “Effective writing instruction begins with clear and deliberate planning, but is flexible” – it’s important to have specific learning objectives in mind during each writing period, but also to take advantage of teachable moments.
- “Effective writing instruction and practice happen every day” – writing is often one of the first things to go in a packed day, but consistent periods of uninterrupted writing time is absolutely essential.
- “Effective writing instruction is a scaffolded conversation between teachers and students” – in other words, teachers need to engage with students in a continuous cycle of evaluating writing pieces, providing positive and (sensitively) constructive feedback, then setting goals and checking progress with the next piece.

Conclusion and Citation

In the midst of endless numbers of tips about writing, it’s easy to lose sight of the key principles of effective writing instruction. Almost all the experts interviewed were unanimous in how important these elements are; they are the groundwork for any sort of successful writing instruction.

Krause, K. & Zumbrunn, S. “Conversations with Leaders: Principles of Effective Writing Instruction.” *The Reading Teacher* 65.5 (Feb. 2012), pp. 346-353.
<http://bit.ly/AfIXwB> (subscription only).