Teaching Writing

Writing is an essential skill that all students must learn how to do while in school. What starts out as learning to write ABCs and 123s, soon turns into the ability to write structured sentences that make sense, and then leads to the ability to write essays and reports in a clear and concise manner. It's no wonder that concentrating on the area of writing is so important in the classroom. This guide to teaching writing is geared to help teachers learn some effective ways that kids learn to write. Set Goals The first thing you need to do in order to properly teach writing to your students is to have a goal or purpose for what you want them to write. If a student does not understand what is you are trying to get him to write, he will either become very frustrated with the assignment and/or refuse to complete the assignment. This certainly was not your goal, so explain it to your students clearly.

Example: You want your students to write a paragraph about animals. If you simply say, "I want you to write about animals," you are not giving any direction and students will have a ton of questions to ask you. On the other hand, if you say, "Write about an animal that hibernates in the winter," then you are giving clear instructions of what kind of animal they should be writing about. Also include as much detail in your description of the assignment, such as:

- Why does this animal hibernate?
- What does it mean to hibernate?
- How does this animal survive without eating all winter?

Teach Note-Taking Skills

The proper way to write is to first take notes and then turn the notes into an outline, and finally the finished product. Encourage your students to take notes in a notebook. Next, have them transfer their notes into an organized outline, and lastly, have them turn their outline into a report, in that each paragraph has at least three sentences.

Explain to your students that they should take notes consistently to develop the habit. They will be taking notes throughout their entire school career, so teaching them as early as possible is best. Students may also want to use a highlighter to make important information stand out.

Creative Writing Possibilities

Use your creative side to come up with fun ways for students to write. Writing in the same format will become mundane very quickly. Here are some ideas you might consider using instead:

- Poetry
- Articles (for newspapers, newsletters)
- Interviews

Students enjoy a change of pace every so often. It keeps them on their toes, and keeps them interested in what they learning. You can turn an otherwise boring topic into a creative wonder, if you use your imagination and make writing fun!

Proofreading and Editing

Before handing in any writing assignment, a student should know how to proofread and edit his work. Encourage your students to use these methods for proofreading and editing their papers:

- Laying the paper aside for an hour or two and then going back to check for errors. When you write a paper and check for errors immediately, chances are you will miss something. It is best to clear your mind before proofreading.
- Let someone else read your paper, and do not get upset with constructive criticism.

Help your students create an editing checklist that they can check off on each time they complete a writing assignment. Doing this as a class will ensure that all students have the same checklist in their possession.