

The Direct Instructional Writing Process in Grades 3-8

Instructor: Dr. Martha Dubuque

Course Description: Teachers are facing a critical need to find ways to improve students' writing. How do we actually teach writing skills? This is a question that teachers are asking. Unfortunately, there has been little professional development around how to teach writing vs. assign writing. This course will provide educators with specific methods of teaching the elements of effective writing in grades 3-8.

Teachers will leave the course with:

- Lessons for teaching purpose, organization, and details in both fiction and nonfiction writing;
- Writers' Notebook prompts for students to collect ideas, practice different writing strategies, and expand topics;
- Lessons for students to read like a writer;
- Strategies for integrating grammar into writing instruction;
- Strategies for writing across the curriculum;
- Frames for teaching multiple writing genres;
- Structures for conferencing;
- Tools for giving effective feedback to help students improve their writing.

Required Readings: Participants will read two texts.

Buckner, A. *Notebook Know-How, Strategies for the Writer's Notebook*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2005.

Ray, K.W. *Wondrous Words*. Urbana, Illinois. National Council of Teachers of English, 1999.

Course Goals: Teachers will:

1. Develop lessons for teaching purpose, organization, and details in both fiction and nonfiction writing in grades 3-8.
2. Research how students can use Writers' Notebooks to collect ideas, practice different writing strategies, improve writing fluency, and expand topics.
3. Create a Writers' Notebook as a model.
4. Develop lessons for student analysis and discussion of author's craft in both fiction and nonfiction writing; generate methods for teaching students to read like a writer.
5. Integrate grammar into writing instruction.
6. Construct structures for teacher and peer conferencing.
7. Identify factors in giving effective feedback to help students improve their writing.
8. Use Critical Friends protocols to evaluate student work.
9. Incorporate student reflection and goal setting in writing instruction.
10. Apply strategies for writing across the curriculum.
11. Reflect on essential beliefs and key purposes in teaching writing.
12. Identify obstacles in teaching writing and generate solutions for overcoming them.
13. Differentiate between revising and editing.

Many times educators gain valuable ideas from a course but find themselves so caught up in the urgency of the start-of-the-year that these ideas get pushed to the side. To avoid this, time will be provided within the course for participants to meet in grade-similar groups to discuss how their learning can transfer to their own classrooms. Individual work time will also be provided within the course for participants to analyze their current instructional practices for strengths and desired areas for change and to develop plans that apply to their new learning for the coming school year.

This class is designed as an interactive, collaborative experience. Throughout the course participants will have the opportunity to share their particular questions and interests so that these specific concerns can definitely be addressed in the learning experience.

Teachers may attend as individuals or as members of school-based teams.

The homework reading assignments during the course week are:

- Mon. night: *Notebook Know-How*, read Chapters 1 and 2
Wondrous Words, read Chapter 3
- Tues. night: *Notebook Know-How*, read Chapter 3
Wondrous Words, read Chapter 4
Read *Nonfiction Matters* (excerpt provided in the course)
- Wed. night: *Notebook Know-How*, read Chapter 4
Wondrous Words, read Chapter 5
- Thurs. night: *Notebook Know-How*, read Chapters 5 and 6
Wondrous Words, read Chapters 11, 12, and 13

Overview of the main topics for each day:

- Monday: Writing nonfiction, details
- Tuesday: Writing nonfiction, purpose and organization
- Wednesday: Writing fiction, details
- Thursday: Writing fiction, purpose and organization
- Friday: To be determined by class. One option is conferencing, revising vs. editing

Course Requirements and Grading:

Attend and participate fully in the five summer classes. 10%

Write three responses, each one addressing one of the significant themes, providing textual evidence from the two readings, and describing related goals for professional practice in the upcoming school year. 30%

Lead students to develop a Writer's Notebook. Submit a combination Writer's Notebook/Reference Binder. The Writer's Notebook needs to include: prompts for launching the notebook, collecting ideas, and expanding topics; examples of all writing strategies presented in the class; entries for understanding writing genres; grammar reference pages; models of author's craft. The Reference Binder needs to organize material from our class so that you will leave with notes, handouts, etc. accessible and usable as a guide to your work for the upcoming school year. 20%

Compile an annotated bibliography of mentor texts (texts that can be used to model author's craft in both fiction and nonfiction). Bring copies for colleagues to the Friday class. 20%

Write a summary reflection on our course to include: successes and challenges in writing instruction; connections to the course themes; description of new and modified instructional practices; examples of integrating writing across content areas; evaluation of personal growth as a writing teacher. 20 %

The course themes for the three responses are:

1. Students need to read as writers and discuss author's craft.
2. Students need frequent opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and in a variety of contexts.
3. Students need to develop a sense of identify as writers and reflect on their growth as writers.

Bibliography of texts used in course instruction in addition to those listed as required readings:

- Angelillo, J. *Writing about Reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.
- Calkins, L. *Living Between the Lines*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Press, 1991.
- Culham, R. *6+1 Traits of Writing*. New York: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2003.
- Davis, J. & Hill, S. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.
- Dorfam, L. & Cappelli, R. *Mentor Texts, Teaching Writing Through Children's Literature*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2007.
- Harvey, S. *Nonfiction Matters, Reading, Writing, and Research in Grades 3-8*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 1998.
- Lane, B. *The Reviser's Toolbox*. Shoreham, VT: Discover Writing Press, 1999.
- Rickards, D. & Hawes, S. "Raising Writers: The Teachers' Role," *Educational Leadership*: October, 2004 (pages 68-71).
- Rog, L. & Kropp, P. *The Write Genre*. Ontario: Pembroke Publishers, 2004.
- Stead, T. *Is That a Fact?* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2002.
- Yell, M. "Putting Gel Pen to Paper," *Educational Leadership*: November, 2002 (pages 63-66).

Dear Colleagues,

As the time approaches for the course "The Direct Instructional Process in Writing," I want to welcome you to this learning experience, give you more information about the course, and hear from you about your needs and interests. I am enclosing the course syllabus and a needs assessment.

You will notice that there are two books we will read. Participants are asked to read Chapters 2, 6, and 9 in *Wondrous Words* prior to the start of the course. One of the central ideas we will explore in the course is that students need to read as writers and talk about authors' craft, and these three chapters provide an informative background for that idea.

The homework reading assignments during the course week are listed below.

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Wondrous Words, read Chapters 11, 12, and 13

Here is an overview of the main topics for each day.

- Monday: Writing nonfiction, details
- Tuesday: Writing nonfiction, purpose and organization
- Wednesday: Writing fiction, details
- Thursday: Writing fiction, purpose and organization
- Friday: Conferencing, revising vs. editing

Please bring a copy of the Writing Grade Level Expectations with you. Please also bring an 8 ½ x 11 notebook with you since we will be creating Writers' Notebooks.

This course is designed to be an interactive, collaborative experience that meets participants' particular questions and needs. To help make sure this happens, could you please complete the Needs Assessment and mail it to me?

Thank you for the wisdom and energy you are bringing to our work together. I look forward to seeing you on Monday, July 18.

In the spirit of learning,

Martha Dubuque

