

Instructing Students in Writing and Producing

Accomplished English language arts teachers design instruction to provide their students with varied opportunities for writing and producing texts. In the learning environments of accomplished teachers, writing instruction provides appropriate scaffolding, feedback from both teachers and peers, time for recursive revision, and varied writing and producing tasks to help students progress. Accomplished teachers design writing instruction so that students have the opportunity to demonstrate growth over time. For example, a teacher might have students return to a previous writing activity, either by revising a text written earlier in the year or by performing a new but similar writing task incorporating feedback from a previous assignment. Accomplished teachers recognize students' varying levels of proficiency and strive to differentiate their instruction so that all students are appropriately challenged and supported. Teachers prepare students to be independent writers and producers with a broad repertoire of skills, processes, and strategies.

Accomplished English language arts teachers help students understand that producing text is a complex, recursive thought process in which the writer makes choices as the result of careful reflection on what to express and how best to express it. Accomplished teachers help students understand that, as with anything of value, writing and producing a meaningful text requires planning and hard work. They help students set goals and determine relevant processes to achieve those goals.

Accomplished English language arts teachers know that successful writers and producers can articulate a clear understanding of function, form, and audience, and

that writing and producing require the use of cognitive skills, applied continuously and systematically throughout the development of a work. Therefore, accomplished teachers empower their students with the ability to choose among various forms and functions and then analyze the impact of those choices on achieving the writer's message and purposes for varied audiences. For example, an accomplished teacher would help students explore the different ways a poem and an essay convey a message.

Accomplished English language arts teachers explain that authentic writing and producing frame particular perspectives influenced by the students' personalities, prior experiences, cultures, ideas, and interactions with their audiences. Accomplished teachers give students many opportunities to work with their peers to help them develop, test, and refine ideas within a web of social interactions. Teachers help student writers achieve a careful balance between considering others' comments and retaining a strong individual voice that expresses their own knowledge and perspectives. Teachers remind students that expressing ideas is a social process; to communicate effectively, a writer must retain a keen awareness of the audience.

Accomplished English language arts teachers show students models of argumentative, informative, narrative, aesthetic, and creative texts and help students see that successful writers and producers integrate strategies significant to each genre, such as selecting the most persuasive visuals in a public service announcement or carefully structuring a logical organizational pattern in a research paper. Accomplished teachers discuss different types of model texts with students, depending upon whether they are struggling or experienced writers.

Accomplished English language arts teachers teach students to analyze the elements that go into making a product communicate its intended meaning. Accomplished teachers help their students understand that, although organizational structures vary from one genre to another, the parts of a text must always relate to the whole. In multigenre texts and in texts with hyperlinks, organizational structures may be varied and complex, but meaning still coheres around the writer's organizational decisions. Teachers explain that conventions are important because they help to convey information in a clear, systematic, and efficient manner, thereby maximizing the impact of a text on viewers or readers. Accomplished educators teach grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and sentence formation in such a way that student writers can immediately put their knowledge to use in their own writing. When such an activity would further a learning goal, accomplished teachers may also instruct students in the mechanics of composing nonprint texts, such as films; for example, a teacher might help students manipulate technical elements such as lighting, camera angles, and framing to create meaning. Accomplished teachers help students understand how and when it can be effective to defy conventions, supplying models from great poets, programmers, and others who broke rules in creative and evocative ways.

Accomplished English language arts teachers teach the craft of writing in both isolated and integrated lessons and at many structural levels: diction, sentences,

paragraphs, and complete texts. For instance, a teacher might provide students with guidance about diction by pointing out instances of effective word choice in their writing and asking them to articulate why those particular words are so compelling. Teachers might teach sentence construction through sentence-combining activities or sentence study based on models. They might also have students revise their own sentences within various kinds of texts. A teacher might teach writing at the paragraph level by having students first write a simple paragraph with a main idea and a simple list of supporting details and then layer and connect details in a more mature and fluent way. At the holistic level, teachers help students gain skill in producing cohesive and coherent writing in extended texts. (See [Standard VIII—Language Study](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers encourage their students to share their own writing and producing. Teachers provide varied opportunities for students to assess, discuss, and publish the texts they are creating. In the learning environments of accomplished teachers, students learn to be intensely aware of their audiences. A teacher might assign students to write a movie review one way when casually reporting to their friends via social networking and then in a different way when constructing a formal review for the school newspaper or blog.

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand the critical role that publication plays in the teaching of writing and producing. The public context for writing and producing creates a need to draft, edit, and revise in disciplined ways to address the needs and expectations of varied audiences. Publishing also creates opportunities for authentic feedback for students. Accomplished teachers convey to their students that publishing can range from sharing a journal entry with classmates, to writing a proposal for a substantial change in the school, to publishing work on a publicly constructed and monitored site. In some cases, teachers who strive to publish their own work provide powerful models for students.

Accomplished English language arts teachers respond with genuine interest to the writing of all students, model the effect that writing has on an audience, and provide fair and constructive responses to improve the writing of every student. Accomplished teachers understand the personal nature of writing and producing, and they know that students reveal a great deal about their personalities, their imaginations, their dreams, their backgrounds, and their experiences through their work. Teachers understand that writing can give voice to every student, regardless of their level of fluency with language. Accomplished teachers know that the essence of an effective and meaningful writing style is an individual voice, so they support their students in developing a voice that reflects and values their individuality. Teachers respond to student writing with sensitivity and take advantage of opportunities to build students' sense of confidence and competence as communicators.

Accomplished English language arts teachers present writing and producing as means of connecting to texts, to diverse cultures, to our society, and to the meaning of our lives. They teach writing and producing in a way that promotes fairness, equity, and respect for diversity. Accomplished teachers infuse their learning environments with rich texts representing a broad range of cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds

to spark inquiry, enrich language study, build cultural awareness, and serve as models for writing. Teachers encourage students to produce texts that celebrate their knowledge, their cultural identity, and the meaning they find in their lives. (See [Standard II—Fairness, Equity, and Diversity](#).)

Accomplished English language arts teachers understand that writing and producing can help students explore the world beyond their immediate surroundings and become members of new communities. Accomplished teachers guide students toward the production of texts that address inequity, question power structures, and strive to promote a more just world. Accomplished English language arts teachers instill in their students the desire and the ability to use communication skills to participate in the democratic process through such activities as writing editorials, commenting on blogs, and creating letters to public officials. Teachers help students identify opportunities to explore, promote, or defend the causes with which they identify.

Accomplished English language arts teachers realize that their students need an awareness of the ethics governing the use of various media. Accomplished teachers help students understand the nature of intellectual property, as well as the value of research. Teachers guide students toward the responsible use of copyrighted information, including strategies for avoiding plagiarism and instruction in conventions for quoting text and for in-text citations and lists of sources. When students produce works that use images, music, movies, or other media created by others, accomplished teachers help them understand and apply the doctrine of fair use. Accomplished teachers value students' writing as intellectual property and impress a sense of ownership and their rights as creators in their students. When teachers use student work for their professional purposes, they honor student ownership by obtaining permission from the student.