TEN POINTERS FOR TEACHING WRITING TO STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS  
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1. **Allocate adequate time for writing**
   Students need a minimum of thirty minutes of time for writing every day to improve their skills.

2. **Provide a range of writing tasks**
   Start with writing about what students know best (self-selected topics) then as skills improve, add problem-solving, writing games, and a range of different writing tasks.

3. **Create a social climate that promotes and encourages writing**
   Be accepting and encouraging and set a classroom tone that supports sharing with an audience as well as writing conferences (with peers as well as adults) that include constructive feedback.

4. **Integrate writing with other academic subjects**
   Try to include writing as a means of expression in Social Studies and Science, as well as part of an instructional activity in Reading and Language Arts.

5. **Focus on the processes central to writing**
   These processes include prewriting activities, writing and rewriting activities.

6. **During the writing phase focus on the “higher order” task of composing, and attend the basic elements of spelling and punctuation later**
   With some students, their mechanics of writing are so poor that they interfere with their ability to get ideas down on paper successfully. Assist these students to focus on the first steps of the writing process and to worry about errors, editing and presentation after their writing is complete.

7. **Teach explicit knowledge about characteristics of good writing**
   The implicit knowledge about writing needs to be made explicit. Discuss and practise writing in different genres and for different audiences.

8. **Teach skills that aid “higher level” composing**
   These skills include conferencing with peers and teachers, and strategy instruction which provides guidelines for brainstorming, sentence composition, evaluation of effectiveness etc.

9. **Ask students to identify goals for improving their writing**
   Students can set realistic goals regarding their progress in writing (prewriting, writing and rewriting), and both the students and the teacher can evaluate progress towards these goals.

10. **Do not use instructional practices that are not associated with improved writing for students**
    Instructional practices that have not been associated with improved writing are isolated instruction of grammar and sentence diagramming, and an overemphasis on students’ errors.

**Sources:** Bos & Vaughn (1994); Graham & Harris (1988)
ESTABLISHING A WRITING COMMUNITY IN YOUR CLASSROOM

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1. **Have your students write every day for at least 45-60 minutes.**
   Students need to be encouraged to write frequently and for extended periods of time if they are to “develop the knowledge, skill, will and self-regulation underlying effective writing” (Graham & Harris, 1997, p. 416)

2. **Encourage your students to develop areas of expertise.** Help your students to see that they can become “class experts” in a particular area, subject or writing form. Further, by having your students work on topics of their own choosing, you will be enhancing their motivation to write as well as their sense of worth – of their ideas and accomplishments

3. **Have your students keep their writing in folders.** By keeping writing folders, students can constantly peruse their “ideas for topics” lists, reread their drafts, and evaluate their progress over time. Students also need to value the topics and tasks of their writing. By having your students write about topics that they have themselves generated or chosen, and by having them keep their work neatly in folders, students will develop a sense of the value and importance of their work. This in turn will help them to develop important self-regulation strategies such as planning and revising

4. **Let your students see you writing - composing, editing, rewriting . . .** Let the students see that writing can be exciting, challenging, enjoyable, difficult, energizing, tiresome and so on . . . even for adults

5. **Make time for your students to share their writing.** Your students need opportunities to share and discuss their writing if they are to form a strong supportive writing community

6. **Read to your students as often as possible.** The connections between reading and writing have been well documented. Read and discuss a variety of reading materials with your students – literature, poetry, short stories, recipes, opinion pieces, editorials and so on

7. **Expand your writing community outside of the classroom.** Place published books by your students in the school library. Invite authors from the community and from other classrooms come to read their work in your classroom. Try to involve your students in legitimate or authentic writing tasks aimed at a real audience; for example, a grant application for funds to clean up a local stream

8. **Help your students to develop their skills in evaluating their own writing**
   Have your students set goals, evaluate their work, and share their perceptions with you and their peers in writing conferences; keep records of these conferences in their writing folders

9. **Slow down! Students need time to think, reflect, ask questions, ponder as they write.** Further, your students are more likely to enjoy writing if the classroom environment isn't filled with pressure - if it is supportive, pleasant and non-threatening. Such a classroom allows students to take the risks necessary if they are to refine and expand the self-regulation skills needed for skilled writing

**Sources:** Bos & Vaughan (1994) & Graham & Harris (1997)
RESOURCE LIST

The Craft of Writing: Instructional Strategies & Resources


The Art of Writing: Considering the Context and Climate of your Classroom


Resources for Students


Assessment


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