

What We Know About Teaching Writing

Best Practices For Teaching Writing

Create a Compelling Context in Class

Have students...

- Read something
- Talk about something
- Think about something

...with us and their peers.

Ask Students to Propose a Project

- Formally
- Informally

Ask Students to Do Some Things

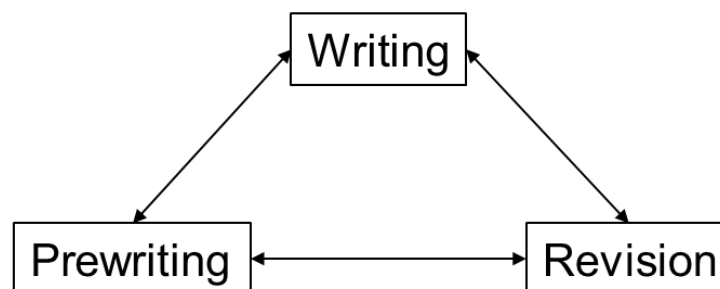
- Research
- Plan (outlines, notes)
- Explore the genre

Ask Students to Write a Draft

- Put words on paper
- Full or partial drafts
 - Beginnings, theses, etc.

Ask Students to Revise

- "Re-see" your draft
- Substantive revision
- Surface revision



How To Do These Things in Class

Element of Teaching Writing	How We Do This In Class
Create a Compelling Context in Class Have students... • Read something • Talk about something • Think about something ...with us and their peers.	• We assign readings • We lead class discussions • We converse with students and encourage them to converse with each other
Ask Students to Propose a Project • Formally • Informally	• We assign proposals • We and their peers respond verbally and/or textually • We point students in promising directions
Ask Students to Do Some Things • Research • Plan (outlines, notes) • Explore the genre	• We help students get started on research • We ask them to report on progress • We look at plans and research • We and their peers give feedback • We look at samples and theorize the features of the genre
Ask Students to Write a Draft • Put words on paper • Full or partial drafts ◦ Beginnings, theses, etc.	• We ask for full or partial drafts (No way! To ask them for a draft we ask them for a draft?)
Ask Students to Revise • "Re-see" your draft • Substantive revision • Surface revision	• We and their peers read and give feedback on drafts and parts of drafts • We give advice on how to make progress, proceed, which may include going back and making plans, doing research, and drafting

How To Design Writing Assignments and Assignment Sequences

1. Identify a genre in our discipline.
 - My discipline is Rhetoric and Writing. We are interested in how people use language to make things happen in the world, and how people learn how to write.
 - My genre: The Research Report, where we compare one approach to teaching some aspect of writing to another.
2. Think about an assignment that will allow our students to learn and practice this genre, or a part of this genre.
 - My assignment: Write me a proposal for a research project (that would, eventually, after you've done the research, lead to a Research Report).
 - Notice how I slimmed it down for the classroom, because my one-semester course doesn't have time for us to actually experiment with two approaches to teaching some aspect of writing.
3. Think about how we might break up that assignment into component parts.
 - Look at some sample proposals from last year's class, using the Genre Analysis Guide. Discuss as a class.
 - Write a short "Letter of Interest" in which you:
 - Identify a general topic area (like teaching organization or teaching grammar)
 - List some key words you'll use to begin your research into this topic
 - List some tentative ideas about the kind of project you might propose
 - Draft a Literature Review in which you identify gaps in the research.
 - Articulate a research project that will address the gaps you found.
 - Put it all together in a Proposal.
4. Think about the kinds of feedback we might offer and make available during the course of the project.
 - Look at some sample proposals.
 - Feedback: what worked, what didn't.
 - Write a short "Letter of Interest."
 - Feedback: this is what seems promising, here are a couple more keywords, and here's what seems promising in your project.
 - Draft a Literature Review.
 - Peer feedback on the quality of summaries and the gap.
 - My feedback on how well you've covered the lit (what's missing) and how well you articulate the gap.
 - Articulate a Research Project.
 - Peer feedback on your research design and how well your project addresses the gap. Suggestions for improving design.
 - My feedback on research design, addressing gap, and improving design.
 - Draft Final Proposal.
 - Get peer and Writing Center feedback on organization and content first. Then a second round of correctness feedback.
 - My feedback on improving organization and content and argument. Minor correctness feedback.
 - Submit Project.
 - I read it, give you a grade, and a short comment on how it went for you.