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# What Makes an Effective Expository Writing Program?

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**M**any of today's students struggle to communicate clearly and effectively in their writing. Students have difficulty with writing basic sentences, in forming well-organized paragraphs, and in constructing written work that conveys a meaningful message. These problems seem to be the trend across the nation. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1998), 83 percent of eleventh-graders write at a functional level, 31 percent of them write at a satisfactory level, and 2 percent write at a proficient level. This trend reveals an alarming number of students who are at the beginning stages of effective writing, even though they are in the final stages of their formalized education.

The focus of this article will be to examine the research on effective writing instruction. First, research on process writing will be presented. Five elements of process writing — daily writing, ownership, purpose and audience, peer conferences and interaction, and skills integration — will be highlighted. Next, research on expository writing will be examined. In particular, students' development of expository writing ability and strategies for teaching expository text structure will be emphasized. Finally, conclusions will be drawn to highlight the significance of the research reviewed.

## Research on Process Writing

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing is a skill that is necessary for students' success in school and in life. The ability to write well is the ability to communicate in a meaningful manner. In order for students to develop this ability, students must recognize themselves as writers. When students realize their role as writers, they begin to understand the process of writing (Graves, 1996).

Graves (1983) and Calkins (1994) discovered that students do engage in a process when writing. This process, however, is a nonlinear process because it is not one that students follow straight through from start to finish. Instead, it is a series of stages such as brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing that students involve themselves in again and again until they reach the final stage: the publishing stage.

Teachers can capitalize on this process by including in their writing instruction several important elements that help students grow and develop as writers. These elements include daily writing, ownership, purpose and audience, peer conferences and interaction, and skills integration. In the following sections, the above components will be examined in light of their influence on improving students' writing ability.

## Daily Writing

Students need the opportunity to write on a daily basis (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994;

Graves, 1996; Graves & Murray, 1980). When students are not given the occasion to write daily, "they never get the rhythm of writing" (Graves, 1996, p. 27). Calkins (1994) likens the art of writing to the finesse of jogging. She says it is difficult for writers to keep an interest in or remember ideas related to a particular piece of writing if they have not looked at it in two or three days. Likewise, it is difficult for joggers to build up strength and maintain a pace in jogging if they have had a few days off. Calkins (1994) feels that, with practice, writing will become more natural, and it will be easier to do. Graves and Murray (1980) note that when students engage in writing every day, they begin to reflect on experiences and ideas that they could write about.

When students write on a daily basis, positive effects occur. Bridge, Compton-Hall, and Cantrell (1997) found that students who spent more time writing also spent more time in higher-level activities related to writing such as composing, revising, and editing. Even young children, such as those in kindergarten, made considerable gains in writing ability and in acquisition of writing skills when they were given opportunity to write everyday (Hertz and Heydenberk, 1997). Daily writing not only allows students the opportunity to experiment and improve in their writing, but also gives them the chance to take ownership and control of their writing.

### **Ownership**

According to Calkins (1994) and Graves (1983), in order for students to take control of their own writing, they must be allowed to choose what they want to write about. Temple, Nathan, Burris, and Temple (1988) concur that students must be given choice in order to establish a sense of ownership in their writing. With freedom of choice comes freedom of expression. Cunningham (1986) notes that students' ability to choose their own topics provides the necessary motivation to write. Students who are allowed to choose their own topics have a vested

interest in what they are writing and will be more likely to plan and revise their writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Temple et al., 1988; Turbill, 1982).

Research involving both elementary and high school writers has shown the positive effect of topic choice on writing quality. For instance, Emig (as cited in Humes, 1983) observed eight high school seniors who were considered to be good writers and found that when these students were allowed to select their own topics, they put more effort into planning and revising their writing. From these observations, Emig concluded that students should be allowed to choose their own topics in order to promote effective writing habits (Humes, 1983). Graves and Murray (1980) found similar results in their longitudinal study of the development of the writing process in elementary students. They found that when students chose their own topics, they spent more time reworking and revising their pieces, and as a result, their writing ability improved.

### **Purpose and Audience**

When students take ownership in their writing, they recognize that in their writing they are not only expressing thoughts and ideas to themselves, but also communicating thoughts and ideas to others (Graves, 1983). In order for students to communicate in a meaningful manner, they must write for real purposes (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Routman, 1994). Rosenblatt (1989) theorizes that writing is a "transaction" of information between two people. Students' purposes for writing depend upon the persons reading it. Teale and Martinez (1989) found that kindergarten students perceived writing as a useful way to communicate. The kindergartners realized the practicality of writing signs, shopping lists, and letters. Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, and Rosen (as cited in Bright, 1995) found that secondary students wrote for informational, expressive, and poetic purposes, and their purpose for writing was largely dependent upon who would read their writing.

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In their writing, students must not only set a purpose, but also select an audience. Students must recognize the role the audience plays in their writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994). Graves and Hansen (1983) examined the effect of audience on first-grade students' writing. The "author's chair," as it was called, was used in the classroom as a way for students to share their finished writing and get reactions from other students in the class. Students in the audience asked questions of the student in the "author's chair" to clarify meaning in and/or purpose for that student's writing.

According to Lamme (1989), an authentic audience helps students identify gaps in their writing. Audiences also help students to figure out what does and does not make sense in their writing (Graves, 1994).

### Peer Conferences and Interaction

One important component of process writing is the influence of peers in students' writing. Peers play an influential role in developing students' writing by providing an audience that students may bounce ideas off and get suggestions from (Calkins, 1994; Dyson, 1987; Freedman, 1995; Graves & Hansen, 1983; Temple et al., 1988; Turbill, 1982). In Dyson's work (1987) with kindergarten and first-graders, she found that peers' questions and perspectives helped students to clarify ideas in their writing. Thus, interaction is necessary to the act of writing.

In support of Dyson's (1987) findings, Freedman (1995) found comparable results in her study of second- and third-grade students' collaboration during writing time. Her yearlong study focused on the value of peer interaction during writing workshop. Freedman (1995) noted that a particular story pattern, known as the *Mr. and Mrs. stories*, emerged through the interactions of a small group of students. With the evolution of this story pattern, reluctant writers not only became interested in writing, but also became motivated to write their own

Mr. and Mrs. stories. Collaboration helped already talented writers develop more complicated stories with more developed characters, as well as more detailed and integrated plots. With the influence of peers, students spent increased amounts of time on particular pieces and produced some of their best work.

Peer conferences and peer interaction play an important role in helping students improve their writing. As students communicate with others, they see a need for revision in order to clarify the meaning of their writing for their audience (Dyson, 1987; Graves & Murray, 1980). In Humes' (1983) review of the research, she noted, "the more the subjects drafted and revised, the more proficient they became at writing" (p. 6). If students are to improve in their ability to write clearly and effectively, they must participate in peer conferences and interact informally with peers on a regular basis.

### Skills Integration

In order for students to grow and develop as writers, they need to be provided with the necessary tools for writing, namely, the skills associated with the task of writing. Knowledge of the rules of grammar and usage is necessary for students to write effectively. However, teaching skills and grammar concepts in isolation has no effect on improving students' writing (Hillocks, 1986).

Calkins (1980) demonstrated that teaching skills within the context of students' own writing is very beneficial. In her study of third-graders' use of punctuation, she found that students who were taught punctuation in context were able to explain two times as many kinds of punctuation as the students who were taught punctuation in isolation. Students who were taught punctuation in context also saw a purpose for using punctuation in their writing.

Noyce and Christie's (1983) work further supports Calkins' (1980) findings. They examined a language arts program called the Integrated Sentence-Modeling Curriculum

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(ISMC), a program designed to integrate reading, writing, and grammar. Results revealed that students' writing ability improved when students were taught grammar within the context of writing. Even students who do not participate in a formal program such as ISMC can benefit from integrated skills instruction. For example, DiStephano and Killion (1984) studied the writing skills of fourth- through sixth-graders' who were taught with a process writing approach and also conclude that students' writing ability improves when skills are taught in the context of writing.

One way to teach skills in the context of writing is through the use of mini-lessons (Calkins, 1994). Mini-lessons are 5- or 10-minute lessons usually taught at the beginning of a writing period. During mini-lessons, the teacher models writing strategies and presents examples of good writing. In addition, children's literature and trade books can be used to teach skills and strategies. McElveen and Dierking (2001) have successfully implemented the use of children's literature in their kindergarten and fourth-grade classrooms and note that "students are able to observe good writing, which enhances their ability to recognize clear, focused, elaborated text in other literature as well as in their own writing" (p. 364).

Mini-lessons can also be used to help students understand the process of revision (Calkins, 1994; Graves & Murray, 1980). In mini-lessons, teachers model strategies for revision using students' own writing. The benefit is that students can immediately apply these strategies to their own writing. Mini-lessons are often meant for the benefit of the whole class. Yet, there are times when only one or two students need instruction in a particular writing skill. The proper format for this particular instruction is the teacher-student conference (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983).

According to Calkins (1994), "teacher-student ... conferences ... are at the heart of teaching writing. Through them students learn to interact

with their own writing" (p. 223). Teacher-student conferences are effective because they provide a vehicle for individualized or small-group instruction. They are also a means for providing direct and relevant instruction in the particular skill or skills with which students need help. If students are able to see the need for the skill being taught, they are more likely to use it in their own writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Temple et al., 1988).

In conclusion, the research in process writing points to instruction that provides (a) opportunity for daily writing, (b) a sense of ownership in students' writing, (c) an authentic purpose and audience for writing, (d) occasion for peer conferences and interaction, and (e) teaching in the skills associated with writing through the use of mini-lessons and teacher-student conferences.

### Research on Expository Writing

"Expository writing, the ability to explain or provide information on a topic, is an important skill in upper elementary and junior high grade levels" (Thomas, Englert, & Gregg, 1987, p. 21). In fact, it remains an important

ability throughout all schooling; as Langer (1992) notes, expository writing accounts for the majority of assignments that students complete throughout their school career. Essays, reports,

research papers, and other assignments related to content area subjects are all forms of expository writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1989; Thomas et al., 1987). Students are expected to use these expository forms to learn subject material, to demonstrate mastery of content, and to exhibit aptitude in writing. In the following sections, students' development of expository writing skills and students' difficulties with the structure of expository text will be examined. The teaching of text structures commonly found in expository writing and the modeling of the strategies used in the writing process will be presented.

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### Development of Expository Writing Skills

The ability to write well is a valuable skill for students to acquire. At present, educators are placing a greater emphasis on students' ability to communicate clearly and effectively in their writing. In order to understand how students obtain expository writing skills, Langer (1992) studied the development of expository writing in 16 third-graders, 36 sixth-graders, and 15 ninth-graders. She found that students organized their writing using one of the five following forms:

"(1) simple description, (2) topic with description, (3) topic with description and commentary, (4) topic with elaboration, or (5) point of view with defense" (p. 36).

Langer (1992) found that many third-graders used simple description, whereas most ninth-graders used point of view.

As students matured, the form of their writing progressed from the simple form to the more complex form. However, all forms were present at all grade levels in varying degrees. Langer (1992) concluded that in order for students' writing ability to improve, students' natural development of expository writing skills must be considered when choosing instructional methods and techniques for teaching expository writing.

In related research, Temple et al. (1988) examined the writing of first-, second-, and third-graders and discovered that young students often wrote in a transitional mode. They noted that as students attempted to make the transition between the expressive mode of writing and the transactional mode of writing, they often included elements of personal expression in their informational writing. Thus, their findings support Langer's (1992) findings that knowledge of how to write expository text is developmental.

### Difficulties with the Structure of Expository Text

Although Langer (1992) and Temple et al. (1988) agree that knowledge of expository text is developmental, students of all age levels con-

tinue to have difficulty writing expository text (Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, Fear, & Gregg, 1988; Englert, Raphael, Fear, & Anderson, 1988; Englert & Thomas, 1987; Thomas et al., 1987) and instruction in expository writing is often weak or non-existent (Raphael, Englert, Kirschner, 1989).

Recent national and state test scores reveal students' difficulty with writing expository text. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (1998), only 2 percent of

eleventh-graders write at a proficient level. 1999

MEAP scores also showed a steep decline in students' writing ability and exposed students' deficiency in expository writing (Michigan Department of Education, 2001b).

Many researchers

(Englert, Raphael, Fear et

al., 1988; Englert & Thomas, 1987; Raphael & Englert, 1990; Raphael et al., 1989; Raphael, Kirschner, Englert, 1988) have examined students' expository writing ability and found that students lack knowledge of the organizational structure of expository writing and have difficulty establishing a purpose of and an audience for their writing. In addition, they often lack awareness of the strategies used in the process of writing and have trouble obtaining information from expository texts to use in their own writing.

One explanation may be students' limited "metacognitive" knowledge of expository text. Englert, Raphael, Fear et al. 1988 questioned learning disabled, low achieving, and high achieving fourth- and fifth-grade students about writing in an interview. Results showed that learning disabled students not only had little knowledge about the types of text structures specific to expository writing, but also had little understanding of the writing process. When asked to write exposition, high achieving and, at times, low achieving students exhibited some knowledge of text structures and used them to organize ideas in their own writing. Students who recognized text structures and utilized the

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writing process performed better in their own writing than those who did not acknowledge the text structures and did not engage in the writing process.

Taylor (1986) also found that metacognitive awareness of expository text structure influences writing quality. Fourth- and fifth-grade students who constructed poorly written summaries seemed to lack awareness of text structure. On the other hand, students who wrote well-written summaries demonstrated understanding of text structure by incorporating particular structures into their own writing.

As the research indicates, students often have difficulty writing expository text because they fail to recognize its specific organizational structures, and they fail to understand the strategies used in the writing process (Englert, Raphael, Fear et al., 1988; Englert & Thomas, 1987; Raphael & Englert, 1990; Raphael et al., 1989; Raphael et al., 1988). Students needing to improve their ability to write clearly and effectively are likely to benefit from direct instruction in the structure of expository text, along with explicit teaching of the strategies used during the writing process.

### Text Structures

Narrative reading and creative writing are the forms that many younger students are familiar with and experience on a daily basis (McGee & Richgels, 1985; Piccolo, 1987). However, as students advance to the upper elementary grade levels and beyond, they are required to engage in content area reading and expository writing as a way of gaining knowledge of subject area material (Taylor & Beach, 1984). This presents problems for most students because the organization of ideas in expository writing differs from the organization of ideas in narrative writing. The five most common structures found in expository writing are description, sequence, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution (Vacca & Vacca, 1999).

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According to Raphael et al. (1988), authors select different text structures depending on the message they are trying to convey to their audience. Each text structure answers a different set of questions. For example, an explanation (sequence) text structure answers the following questions: "What materials are needed?" "What steps are needed?" They also state that each text structure has a different set of "key words" that are used to alert the reader to the type of text structure the author has selected. For example, words such as "first," "next," and "last" signal the reader that the author is using the explanation text structure.

Several researchers (Armbruster, Anderson, and Ostertag, 1987; Miller and George, 1992; Taylor and Beach, 1984) have examined the effectiveness of teaching text structure on improving students' ability to write expository text. Armbruster et al. (1987) examined the effects of summary writing and text structure instruction with fifth-grade students. In their study, students were divided into two groups. One group received traditional instruction and completed study sheets on the material they read. The second group received instruction in text structures and summary writing. Not surprising, students who received instruction in text structures and summary writing produced more

organized summaries and included more main ideas from the text in their own writing than the group who completed study sheets. Likewise, Taylor and Beach (1984) and Miller and George (1992) found that students who received instruction on

using text structure to outline the main idea and details of reading selections demonstrated more effective use of text structure in their writing, produced more organized summaries, and included more relevant details than students who did not receive such instruction.

Although these researchers (Armbruster et al., 1987; Miller & George, 1992; Taylor & Beach, 1984) found that students' ability to write sum-

maries improved when they were given explicit text structure instruction, no mention was made in their findings as to the carryover of text structure instruction in students' writing when they were allowed to select their own topics and gather information for their own writing. However, other researchers (Englert, Raphael, Anderson et al., 1988; Englert, Raphael, Fear et al., 1988; Raphael et al., 1988) have examined students' writing ability as it relates to the transfer of text structure instruction into their own writing.

Englert, Raphael, Fear et al. (1988) state that knowing a text structure helps students plan, organize, and use appropriate language to create a "complete" and readable text. Englert, Raphael, Anderson et al. (1988) found that learning disabled students made significant gains in their writing when given specific instruction in text structure. For example, students were able to produce a sequenced explanation, providing almost every detail necessary to carry out the task being described. In another instance, one student provided relevant details and gave a full and fluent explanation of how to play football.

In their review of the Expository Writing Program — an expository writing instructional program designed to aid educators in teaching text structures, Raphael et al. (1988) state that "EWP research indicates that teaching students that different text structures exist, answer different types of questions, and use specific key words and phrases as signals to readers improved students' ability to gather and compose information" (p. 791).

Research suggests that students' writing ability does improve when students are taught expository text structures. However, as one study (Raphael et al., 1989) revealed, text structure instruction alone is not sufficient for improving students' writing ability. Results showed that although students used appropriate text structure patterns, their writing was stale, dull, and empty.

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From these findings, Raphael et al. (1989) concluded that students' writing lacked purpose and audience because they had not been taught text structures within a process writing approach.

### **Text Structure Instruction within a Process Approach to Writing**

As discussed earlier, use of the writing process improves students' ability to communicate effectively in writing. Incorporation of the writing process into an expository writing curriculum is beneficial for students in terms of making their writing relevant and meaningful to others (Beach, 1983; Raphael & Englert, 1990; Reppen, 1995).

By engaging in the writing process while learning expository text structures, students recognize the purpose for their writing and establish an audience for their writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1994; Routman, 1994). According to Flood, Lapp, and Farnan (1986), "as students attempt to control structure through writing, they gain insight into the fact that writers organize the reader's comprehension" (p. 558). In a combined program where students are taught text structure within a process writing approach, students begin to see the value of communicating clearly and effectively in their writing.

One of the main premises of the process writing approach is student selection of topics.

According to Graves (1989), students write best about subjects with which they are familiar. Calkins (1994) expressed that many young children have significant knowledge about the world. Their hobbies, interests, and collections should be starting points for writing (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1989; Temple et al., 1988).

Developers of the Expository Writing Program have incorporated this premise into the framework of their program. Students participating in the Expository Writing Program first learned expository text structure by drawing upon their own knowledge of a particular topic and writing about it using a specific text structure. Develop-



ers of EWP found that students were able to focus on learning the text structure and, at the same time, maintain interest and take ownership in what they were writing (Raphael et al., 1988).

Although topic choice is an important element of the process approach to writing, brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing are all necessary components of the writing process. However, many

students lack specific strategies for helping themselves plan, draft, edit, and revise. Several studies have shown the effectiveness of using teacher modeling of these strategies on improving students' writing ability (Englert, Raphael, Anderson et al., 1988; Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, and Stevens, 1991; Gordon, 1990; Raphael & Englert, 1990; Raphael et al., 1989; Reppen, 1995).

Teacher modeling of strategies and thinking processes associated with writing is essential to helping students understand the process of writing (Englert & Raphael, 1989). Because the thoughts and strategies involved in writing are not outwardly observable, teachers need to express their thought processes while producing their own writing or examining someone else's writing. Teacher modeling of the strategies involved in brainstorming, drafting, editing, and revising is fundamental in helping students understand how to use text structure, determine an audience and purpose for their writing, and revise their work (Englert & Raphael, 1989; Englert, Raphael, Anderson et al., 1991; Raphael & Englert, 1990).

One method of teacher modeling is the use of *think sheets*. In their expository writing program, Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing (CSIW), Englert and Raphael (1989) developed a series of think sheets to coincide with each stage of the writing process. These think sheets help students visualize the strategies and thought processes that good writers go through. For example, the Plan think sheet not only guides students in setting a purpose and selecting an

audience, but also leads them in gathering information and clustering ideas. Think sheets incorporate strategies that are unique to specific text structures, such as signal words and questions that particular text structures hope to answer.

Students use think sheets as guides until they are able to internalize the strategies and processes involved in writing expository text (Raphael & Englert, 1990). While using the think sheets, students are encouraged to interact with peers about their writing. While talking to their peers, students are able to voice the "inner dialogue"

that is going on while they are planning, drafting, revising, and editing their expository text (Englert, Raphael, Anderson, Anthony, and Stevens, 1991). Peer editing, conferencing, and sharing play a vital role not only in establishing a real audience and purpose for writing, but also in influencing the process of revision (Englert, Raphael, Anderson et al., 1988).

Several studies have examined the effectiveness of teacher modeling, think sheets, and peer collaboration, along with teaching text structure in expository writing instruction (Englert, Raphael, Anderson et al., 1988; Englert et al., 1991; Raphael & Englert, 1990; Raphael et al., 1989). One particular study of sixth-graders (Raphael et al., 1989) revealed that students made great improvements in their ability to organize a comparison/contrast paper when given the think sheets to guide their thinking as it related to the comparison/contrast text structure. In their longitudinal study of the effectiveness of CSIW, Englert et al. (1991) found that fourth- and fifth-grade students using CSIW improved their writing ability, applied their newly acquired knowledge of strategies and text structures to new writing assignments where no structure was given, wrote for an audience, and took ownership of their writing.

Gordon (1990) also showed the significance of peer collaboration in text structure writing instruction. Gordon (1990) studied the kinds of

***Peer editing, conferencing, and sharing play a vital role not only in establishing a real audience and purpose for writing, but also in influencing the process of revision.***

changes, as well as the frequency of changes, that sixth-grade students made to their text structure writing over an eight-month period. She found that the suggestions that students made to their peers for revision were almost always related to text structure and overall meaning of the text. Although students did not always follow the suggestions of their peers, she found that students' quality of writing improved and students' organizational ability increased. She concluded that peer interaction is an important factor in improving students' writing ability.

In conclusion, the research in expository writing points to instruction that provides (a) training in expository text structures, (b) teacher modeling of appropriate writing strategies, (c) occasion for peer collaboration, (d) opportunity for guided writing, and (e) opportunity for independent writing. These components can provide teachers with the structure and format for integrating text structure instruction into their writing curriculum.

## Conclusion

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing is a necessary skill for students in today's world. The ability to write well is a valuable tool for students to possess both in school and in life (Langer, 1992; NAEP, 1998; NWP, 1999). In Michigan, for instance, high stakes MEAP tests require students as young as fifth grade to write expository text in science, social studies, and math (MDE, 2001a). The results of the research brought forth in this review may be beneficial to teachers who are trying to improve their writing program. The approach selected, strategies incorporated, lesson plans developed, and materials created should reflect the research findings presented in this literature review.

The process approach to writing should serve as the foundation for writing instruction. The elements essential to the process writing ap-

proach, namely, daily writing, ownership, purpose and audience, peer conferences and interaction, and skills integration are all necessary components (Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983; Graves, 1994; Graves, 1996; Temple et al., 1988).

Students should be encouraged to engage in daily-sustained writing, be allowed to select their own topics, and write for a variety of purposes and audiences (Calkins 1994; Graves, 1983; and Temple et al. 1988). Students should participate in peer and teacher-student conferences since they are an effective means of guiding students through the writing process as well as a useful way to teach writing skills (Calkins, 1994;

Dyson, 1987; Freedman, 1995; Graves and Hansen, 1983; Temple et al., 1988; Turbill, 1982).

Skills, such as grammar, punctuation, and usage should be taught within the context of writing. Studies by Calkins (1980), DiStefano

and Killion (1984), and Noyce and Christie (1983) illustrated the effectiveness of teaching writing skills within their natural context.

Exposure to text structure, at multiple grade levels, should be an integral component of the writing program. Students can benefit from being taught the specific questions, key words, and organizational patterns of expository text structures, specifically the explanation and comparison/contrast text structures (Englert, Raphael, Anderson et al., 1988; Raphael et al., 1988). Several studies (Armbruster et al., 1987; Englert, Raphael, Fear et al. 1988; Miller & George, 1992; Taylor & Beach, 1984) support the explicit instruction of expository text structures in order to improve students' writing ability.

Teacher modeling of the thinking strategies used in the writing process has improved student writing ability (Englert, Raphael, Anderson et al., 1988; Englert et al., 1991; Gordon, 1990; Raphael & Englert, 1990; Raphael et al., 1989; Reppen, 1995). Students also need to have opportunities to evaluate sample of text struc-

*The elements essential to the process writing approach, namely, daily writing, ownership, purpose and audience, peer conferences and interaction, and skills integration are all necessary components.*

tures and construct their own expository text using think sheets (Englert, Raphael, Anderson, et al., 1988; Englert et al., 1991; Raphael & Englert, 1990; Raphael et al., 1989).

In conclusion, the goal of any writing program should be to improve students' ability to communicate clearly and effectively in their writing. As research indicates, certain approaches and instructional methods for teaching writing have proved to be effective in improving students' ability to write. Lesson plans that include direct instruction in expository text structures, teacher modeling of appropriate writing strategies, and immersion in a process writing approach will be most likely help students acquire the necessary skills to communicate clearly and effectively in their writing.

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