BEST PRACTICES defined

By Mira Poncin
Writing for Seconday Education

PROCESS not product

Grading the whole process, not just the final product evens the playing field for students who would otherwise do poorly on just product evaluation.

priming the pump

It is vital to read other versions and examples of a text in order to "prime the pump." -- Arthur Hyde, et al. "Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools"

GETTING FIRED UP!

Various pre-writing experiences are key to getting students fired up to write about their own project, and writing practice boosts the final project. Extensive pre-writing experience gives students "plenty of content and models for writing." -- Arthur Hyde, et al. "Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools"

PEER EDITING

Good peer editing offers the writer feedback that can help them improve their work along the way instead of just getting a grade, and that is the end of it. "Response is a teaching tool; grading is classification." -- Dr. Jon Bush "Some Points about Grading"

genre jungle

Its literally a genre jungle out there: so utilize multiple genres with student writing, not just the stale, old five paragraph essay.

REVISE REVISE REVISE

Students learn from revision, not from the response to their final product. "Always make room for revision before you grade a project" and "Teaching takes place during the project, while grading takes place after the project." -- Dr. Jon Bush "Some Points about Grading"

REAL purposes and REAL audiences

How a project applies to real life is vital to get students invested in their writing. . "Our experience has been that students write with more energy, commitment, and interest when they are writing for *real* purposes to reach *real* audiences, whether large or small, close or distant." -- Susan and Stephen Tchudi *The English Language Arts Handbook*

Inspiring

Create a classroom environment that is conducive to creativity, both with the physical set up as well as with the social atmosphere.

making connections

Making connections to students' own experiences is also important. "Frequently, when students say they don't have anything to write about... they lack belief in the value of their own experience." -- Susan and Stephen Tchudi *The English Language Arts Handbook*

1 on 1

Hold one on one student conferences to give students positive feedback or to identify areas of concern. Positive feedback provides students with confidence in their project. "The most important type of comment is transformative comment where the teacher invites the student to engage in the dialogue." -- Stephen Heller "The Art of Grading Papers Quickly and Effectively"

Lower order and Higher order concerns

Divide and conquer! Highlighting the traits that are important and separating them from grammatical concerns helps student with their entire project, not just their minor errors that they can often correct themselves. "Rather than writing with the goal of 'following the rules,' students should genuinely experience what it means to write for others." -- Patricia Dunn and Kenneth Lindblom "Why Revitalize Grammar?"