

According to classroom strategy experts Susan and Stephen Tchudi, they note in their *English Language Arts Handbook* that the writing process “focuses on how writing evolves and how writers shape and develop their ideas into forms.”

This is better than the standard because it focuses on the *process* not the *product*

Many of the techniques outlined below are adapted from the article by Arthur Hyde et al: “Best Practice: Today’s Standards for Teaching and Learning in America’s Schools” and from Susan and Stephen Tchudi’s *English Language Arts Handbook*.

How to create a writing environment:

• Get the students fired up about writing

Examples:

Have students use drawing or sketching to get their ideas flowing

Do memory searches

Use listing, charting, webbing and clustering of raw idea

Brainstorm as a group

Hold discussions in pairs, small groups, or as the whole class

Do reading and research on questions students generate

Give them plenty of good examples (even of your own writing)

Have them free-write down thoughts without worrying about grammar

Get them interested in the topic *before* handing out an assignment sheet

• Give the students vested interest in their work by having them write for real audiences

Examples:

Letter to the editor of a local paper

Create an Author’s chair where they read their work out loud to other students

Provide venues for students to share their work with an audience

Post their work in the classroom

Create a class book or magazine comprised of student writing

• Create a comfortable environment for peer editing sessions

Examples:

Go over the rules beforehand

Practice the rules

Explain the difference between higher order and lower order concerns

• Create a comfortable classroom writing environment

Examples:

Let students work at their own pace and set their own goals

Set up the classroom for different writing stages, such as bean bags for thinking, computer centers for drafting, etc.

Use background music or allow students

to play their own tunes on their headphones

Have writing resources (such as a thesaurus) easily accessible

Set up editing clusters for students to work with peers

Have the basic guidelines posted for students to easily reference

Hold one-on-one student conferences to give students confidence in their work

At the end of a project, give students opportunities to reflect on what they learned

When evaluating student work, focus on one or two errors at a time

Evaluate their writing based on improvement not on perfection

Give students many opportunities to revise their final product

• Embrace various forms of writing

Examples:

Drama: Bring in a bag of everyday objects and have groups of students do an improv skit about it

Poetry: Have students turn their own writing into poetry, such as transforming an essay into a poem

Fiction: Embrace oral storytelling

Academic writing: Demonstrate the strengths of different resources

Everyday writing: Go through the waste basket to show how practical writing can be