



The Vision for Ambitious Teachers of Writing

Writing is critical to all students' academic success. This belief is substantiated in the work of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) who note writing can be a barrier or a gateway to opportunity. Individuals with excellent writing skills are able to effectively think through ideas and assimilate new information, whereas those who have weak writing skills may be limited in the opportunities they can access and what they can achieve. The *Writing Next* report further asserts "writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy" (Graham & Perin, 2006, p. 3).

The ambitious teacher of writing provides authentic quality writing instruction in a variety of real-world contexts for multiple purposes. This teacher also affirms the importance of collaboration, gives careful attention to assessment, and uses technology effectively. What does ambitious teaching of writing look like and sound like?

Teacher Actions:

1. Provide students with explicit writing instruction so they can develop the ability to monitor and modify their own writing processes, thus improving the quality of their writing. Skillful instruction includes strategies such as scaffolding, goal-setting and the use of rubrics.
2. Use modeling and/or mentor texts as they prepare, foster, and scaffold students' ability to engage in a wide variety of genres and writing tasks including narrative, informational, argumentative and opinion.
3. Require all students to write extensively and for extended lengths of time based on age and development.
4. Use formative assessment to provide ongoing, timely, quality feedback in all stages of writing.
5. Use functional grammar to help students understand how language works in a variety of contexts to further develop the final product through each stage of the writing process.
6. Provide students opportunities to experience writing collaboratively by encouraging critical thinking and collaboration at every stage of the writing process.
7. Expect and provide opportunities for students to use digital media and technologies to compose, produce, and publish writing pieces.

8. Document student growth through portfolios or other methods of collecting student work.
9. Demonstrate knowledge of the Michigan state Anchor Standards for writing as evidenced by student learning objectives and skillful classroom instruction.

Student Actions:

1. Analyze, comment on, compare, and share their thinking about writing through learning-focused “talk”.
2. Utilize a combination of self-evaluation and peer evaluation strategies.
3. Explicitly discuss writing decisions within a variety of contexts and genres.
4. Utilize self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher feedback in all phases of the writing process to enhance their writing.
5. Analyze writing, think critically, and discuss writing decisions.
6. Use computers for writing and collaboration with other writers.
7. Write in a wide variety of genres and for different audiences.
8. Write extensively and for extended periods of time.
9. Exhibit evidence of mastery of the Michigan state Anchor Standards for writing.

The Eastpointe Community Schools’ vision of ambitious teaching of writing is derived from research and reflects current best practice. It also aligns with the Common Core Standards for writing: focusing on developing proficiency in different text types, or purposes for writing; the production and distribution of writing; the use of research skills to build and present knowledge and developing writing fluency. This vision prepares students to be College and Career Ready as it focuses on communication and collaboration, the ability to develop an argument and support it with reasoning, and using technology to produce writing. Additionally, it gives students the ability to provide explanations and solutions to claims of their own making--regardless of their background and experiences.

This vision demands explicit, high-quality writing instruction in every classroom, every day, for every child.