



All About Writing Standard #5: Standard Progression and Research Base

6th – 12th – The Writing Process

(Underlined portions indicate what is new to the grade level)

| 6 th - 8 th Grade | 9 th - 10 th Grade | 11 th - 12 th Grade |
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| With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. | Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing rewriting, or trying a new approach, <u>focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</u> | Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. |

About Standard #5

Students should spend time planning their writing, developing strong revising and editing skills, while being mindful to rewrite when necessary, or try a different approach. Students should always be mindful of the audience and the purpose for the writing. They need to determine what details or information is most important for a particular audience and specific purpose. They need to understand writing as a process rather than solely as a product. Writing as a process requires thinking and being able to articulate those thoughts. The use of peer editing enables students to obtain feedback from classmates in order to strengthen their writing skills. Teachers may choose to provide students with a checklist to use when reviewing their peers' papers.



Research Base for Standard #5: The Writing Process

Why the Writing Process?

The writing process was introduced in the 1970's as a pedagogical approach and used as a model that was considered non-directional. As it evolved, teachers acted as facilitators and gave little direct intervention during the process of writing. "In the formative years, the process approach model was regarded as applying mainly to stories, was linear and prescriptive, merged proofreading and editing as the same thing, and usually did not involve direct instruction—a sort of anything-goes model whereby the process was valued over the product. In this early model, a simplistic pedagogy resulted: after their teacher describes the four stages, students recall and rehearse the steps, use the process to produce a story, and get into groups to share their stories and gain feedback." (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2005, p. 276).

Educators of today need to understand, that the process writing model has taken on a very different meaning. It is not a linear methodology, but a strategy instruction approach. While procedural knowledge is a definitive mindset within the process writing model, it is not a prescriptive end all. Teachers also need to teach skill lessons and strategy lessons in the context of the process. Some of those skills and strategies might include: activating background knowledge, identifying genre elements and infusing them into writing pieces, eliciting and soliciting teacher and peer feedback, and understanding audience awareness and its effects on specific parts of writing such as tone, style, and content. Monitoring for conventions, grammar and self-pacing are also critical skills and strategies that need to be taught in the writing process. "Teaching the process model now demands careful scaffolding and creating lessons that traverse the entire process" (Pritchard & Honeycutt, 2005, p. 276).

Many highly regarded scholars and researchers, including Peter Elbow, Donald Graves, and Lucy Calkins have contributed to the body of knowledge in the field. A large majority of the research has shown significant ties between student achievement in writing and the use of the writing process in some form or its entirety.

Certain activities or "rituals" as Calkins suggests, should be established in order to provide as many writing opportunities for practicing skill building in all stages of the writing process as possible, including allowing the positive emotional construct we wish students to sustain. The following are some rituals that have been suggested by Calkins and the Teachers College Writing Project that help sustain the writing process:

1. **Keep a writing notebook or "lifebook."** As part of the prewriting process, students should be collecting and jotting down ideas of things that interest them: a newspaper article, a website link, a blog post, a photo, a dried flower, etc. Students are encouraged to write in this daily. Meetings are held at the beginning of each day to share samples of short term writing. Questions are asked of the whole group regarding the types of writing that are included in the notebooks such as "How many students have written a poem? A story? A memory? A letter?" Another suggestion is to open the notebook to a favorite piece and allow a sort of "museum walk" for others to see the work. Students then gather to discuss questions like "What did you notice?" Or based on the walk around, "What new idea will they try?"
2. **Set up peer conferencing or teacher conferencing time.** All students, including kindergarten students, need to be taught how to ask questions of writing that they hear. This should be of books that are read to them but also peer writing. This should be modeled and then expected as an outcome in the classroom. The writer needs a safe place to have their story heard and have others assist in the revision portion of the writing process. Easy questions peers might ask about a piece of writing are who, what where, when, and why to add to a partner's writing.

3. **Teach genre and model through authors' writing.** One of Calkins early studies showed that students who were taught genre consistently eventually used it in their writing with automaticity. Calkins has suggested that genre be significant part of a curricular focus and Tanny McGregor suggests teaching genre in a "launching sequence" (McGregor, 2013, p. 3). Both scholars concur that a progression of lessons honoring inquiry, modeling, and practice of language skills while allowing collaborative conversations with peers and the teacher are key to understanding genre.
4. **Poetry has a place.** Poetry is a standard amongst the top researchers when considering writing. It is a part of the creative writing process and takes many forms. It is a suggestion that all classroom teachers, including content area teachers, find ways to include a mix of poetry in their curricula. This means finding connections to the current subject matter, closely reading a piece for meaning, understanding the author's perspective or intent, and writing poetry from the perspective of a scientist, artist, or other content subject.
5. **Mind your "table manners" with grammar.** Students should *not* be held to a standard of correct grammar usage in first drafts. Thoughts move faster than writing occurs, so it is recommended that teachers allow students' ideas to flow and write them onto paper first, regardless of mechanics. Drafting and revisions occur prior to editing. This however, does not mean that final drafts in any classroom can be submitted or accepted with errors. "The editing process makes the text understandable in a uniform way. If we believe that most writing is meant to be read by someone else, then we must use conventional standards to make the piece as clear as possible," (Culham, 2003).
6. **Offer authentic opportunities for writing.** Most researchers agree that offering students real world opportunities to write for real audiences is the most effective way to engage students and foster a positive and reflective emotional response to writing.
7. **Check out these ideas!** Taken from the National Writing Project website, these 30 resources have been awarded as exceptional instructional materials. Visit: <http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/print/resource/922>.

References

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