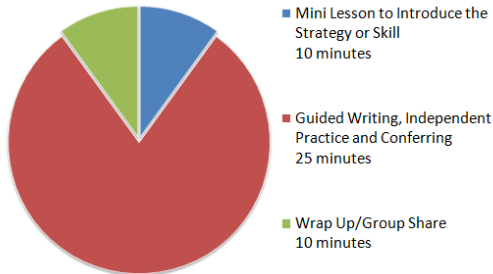


Structure of the Writers' Workshop



Although the Writers' Workshop follows a formal structure, it allows for tremendous creativity on both the part of the teacher and the students. The routine of daily practice with small, identified goals gives the students opportunity to improve their existing skills and learn new skills in small comprehensible chunks, and allows a non-threatening place to learn from mistakes made.

The Workshop requires both student and teacher to understand and learn the writing process in detail and to reassess where the student is in that process on an ongoing basis. Through the combination of structure, creativity, experimentation, and assessing, both student and teacher develop a relationship of trust. Workshop advocates Lucy Calkins and Carl Anderson describe the goal of the Workshop as teaching writers, not fixing the writing.

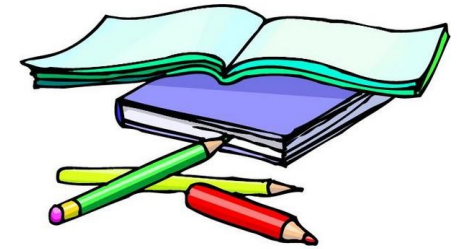
Where Can I Learn More?

- **Tri-Town School Union Website:**
www.tritownschoolunion.com
- **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education– ELA Common Core State Standards Document:**
www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/ela/0111.doc
- **Common Core Standards Website:**
www.corestandards.org



- **For additional questions, please contact Christine Elliott, Tri-Town School Union Director of Curriculum, at:**
celliot@tritownschoolunion.com

Tri-Town School Union Writing Model and Curriculum



Developed by the
Tri-Town School Union
Writing Committee

2010-2011

Alison Barton, Sheila Berman,
Tracy Cleveland, Jennifer Coffey,
Sara DeOreo, Christine Elliott, Lisa Holt,
Maureen Jordan, Kristen Masino,
Donna Mc Ardle, Abby McCarthy,
Kristen Mitchener, Donna Morton,
Karen Nawoichik, Wendy Ryder and MaryAnne York

Types of Writing Emphasized in the Common Core Standards

The types of writing emphasized in the Common Core Standards are embedded into the Units of Study at each grade level within the Tri-Town writing curriculum maps. These types are:

- **Narrative**
- **Argument (Opinion)**
- **Informational/Explanatory**

The Common Core writing standards, (www.corestandards.org) a national standard adopted by Massachusetts in the summer of 2010, include three major types of writing important to students in grades K through 6: Argument (opinion), informational/ explanatory, and narrative. Students are expected to address each of these types of writing at every grade level, though, of course, with different outcomes. Traditionally the primary grades have emphasized narrative writing as their main focus. The new standards emphasize narrative, argument and informational/ explanatory writing equally at all grade levels.

The Six Traits of Writing

The six traits of writing are explicitly taught at every grade level and spiral throughout the Units of Study within the Tri-Town writing curriculum maps.

Experts agree that there are certain characteristics that make up quality writing. These characteristics, or “traits” are:

- **Ideas**—Good writing has clear ideas, a purpose, or focus. It should have specific ideas and details.
- **Organization**—Good writing should have a beginning, middle, and an ending and be well organized and easy to follow.
- **Voice**—Good writing connects with the audience, fits the purpose for writing, and reveals the voice of the writer.
- **Word Choice**—Good writing has specific nouns and verbs and strong words that deliver the writer's message.
- **Sentence Fluency**—Good writing has sentences that vary in length, with a variety of sentence beginnings. The writing flows smoothly from sentence to sentence.
- **Conventions**—Good writing is edited for grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling so the writer's ideas are easily understood.

These traits provide a clear instructional map for writers and diminish the level of subjectivity when assessing writing. These traits are explicitly taught through mini-lessons and reinforced in small guided groups and individual conferences. Students are given ample opportunities to apply their knowledge of these traits in writing pieces of their choosing.

What Can Parents Expect?

Parents often ask, “What did you do in school today?”, and in some cases they need to rely on what they find in the backpack to get an answer.

Because writers' workshop is a process-oriented approach rather than a product-oriented approach, parents can expect to see *fewer* pieces of writing coming home each week. This does not mean the students are writing less. On the contrary, this model allows for more time for students to write daily.

Daily writing typically takes place in a writer's notebook and certain pieces are brought through the writing process to publication. The number of pieces brought to publication will vary depending on grade level and the type of writing being taught.

This model changes the student's focus from fixing a particular piece to improving overall as a writer. You will be able to see evidence of growth in your child's daily writing, as well as in pieces brought to publication. You will also find that your child will have a better awareness of his/her own writing skills, as self-assessment using rubrics that clearly define the traits of quality writing is an integral part of the process.