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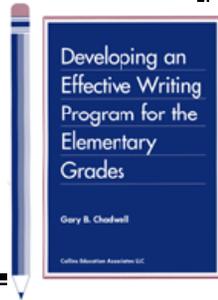
Roxbury Public Schools

I T E R S C O R N E R

Roxbury Introduces The Collins Approach to Writing

The Roxbury Public Schools' staff and administration strongly believe that writing is critical to language development and the development of thinking skills. As a result, our students will be doing incredibly more writing in their classrooms; writing not only about themselves, but also about things that are being learned in all subject areas.

To help us organize our thinking regarding the many kinds of writing, we are implementing the Collins Approach to Writing. Within this approach, there are five types of writing.



Type One Writing: In this type of writing, we get ideas down on paper. It is not a composition, but rather a “quick write” to generate ideas, express opinion, make a prediction, or reflect on an event. Type One writings are not graded for spelling or writing conventions. This kind of writing is evaluated on the basis that the writing was done. Type One writing is done frequently, as it contributes significantly to the children’s learning and language development.

Type Two Writing: This type of writing is also a “quick write.” With Type Two writing, the children are answering a specific question about something they are learning about in class. In evaluating Type Two writing, teachers will be judging the content of the writing – not the conventions. Type Two also contributes significantly to the childrens’ writing fluency.

Type Three and Type Four Writing: These are compositions done to produce ideas and develop specific writing skills. With Type Three and Type Four writing, a strategy entitled *focus correcting* is used. Focus correcting is based on the belief that writing improves more quickly when students work to improve a few skills at a time. Focus Correction areas (FCAs) will be listed at the tops of the papers for these types of writing. On Type Three writing, children self-edit for the focus correction areas, as well as confer with the teacher who focuses attention on the FCAs. With Type Four writing, children also peer edit. Evaluating pieces only on the FCAs keeps children focused on the key aspects of writing and avoids giving too much feedback.

Type Five Writing: This type of writing is the most difficult for all writers, especially young, developing writers. Type Five is writing that is revised and edited to be as free as possible of all types of errors. This kind of publishable writing requires multiple drafts. Most Type Five writing starts as a Type Three and/or Type Four writing. This type of writing will occur much less frequently than the other types, possibly only two times a year.

What Can You Do At Home?

At home, there are several things that can be done to support the Types of Writing done in school. First, encourage your child to write as frequently as possible about a W I D E range of topics.

Second, be aware of the five types of writing your child does at school. Remember that all writing does not have to be perfect and free of errors to be of value to your child’s language development. Keep this newsletter handy, as these summaries and the “quick reference chart” on the back will help you to foster conversation centralized around the types of writing with your child.

Third, be a cheerleader; encourage your child’s writing efforts. Talk about your child’s writing and ask that it be read out loud in a one foot voice (a strategy that is used in the classroom) as a way of checking it.



Practice Grounded in Research
The *Collins Writing Program* has been grounded in research and incorporates best practices methodology. For information on the program’s underlying research and school-based results, please visit...
<http://www.collinseducationassociates.com/research.htm>