

WRITE LIKE THIS: TEACHING REAL-WORLD WRITING THROUGH MODELING AND MENTOR TEXTS

BY KELLY GALLAGHER

In this invaluable book, Kelly Gallagher explains the importance of real-world writing purposes for secondary writers. For each writing purpose, Gallagher features countless examples and lesson ideas of how these methods can be implemented that are readily transferable to any classroom setting. No matter the mode of writing, Gallagher emphasizes the importance of using mentor texts and having teachers write alongside their students to show the sometimes messy process by which writing comes to fruition.





Major Themes

- 1 Relevance**
Writing should be relevant for real-world purposes
- 2 Modeling**
Students need to observe many models when learning about writing
- 3 Express and Reflect**
Students need to engage in far more expressive and reflective writing than they currently do
- 4 Inform and Explain**
These skills will prove invaluable for students in their future endeavors
- 5 Evaluate or Judge**
Students must be informed on the many sides of an issue before being asked to evaluate, judge, take a stand, or propose a solution
- 6 Inquiry**
Students must be encouraged to inquire and explore in order to foster a lifelong sense of curiosity
- 7 Revision**
Revision is not the same as editing for grammar but involves changes to the form and structure of the writing overall

Teacher Takeaways

- 1 The Best Writers**
Teachers are the best writers in the room, so they must write alongside their students and serve as a model
- 2 Vulnerability is Good**
When students see a teacher struggle with what to write next or how to phrase something properly, it reinforces that this is part of the natural writing process
- 3 Professional Models**
Teachers also need to provide students with plentiful models from professional writers and talk explicitly about their craft
- 4 Practice!**
Students need time to write everyday if they are ever going to become experts at it
- 5 Blend Writing Modes**
Types of writing (narrative expository, etc.) are not mutually exclusive modes of writing but can and should be blended based upon the writing task

Important Questions for Teachers to Ask Themselves While Reading

-  How can I carve out more time in my lessons for my students to write?
-  How can I model more of my own writing in my daily lesson plans?
-  How do I make the writing my students are doing more relevant to the real world?
-  What are some strategies Gallagher presents that could be useful in my classroom?

A Final Thought

Any teacher seeking to improve his/her writing instruction would benefit from reading Gallagher's book. He provides important insights and, more importantly, provides models for how teachers can apply his ideas in their own classrooms.