



LISA BURMAN

What is the Writing Workshop approach?

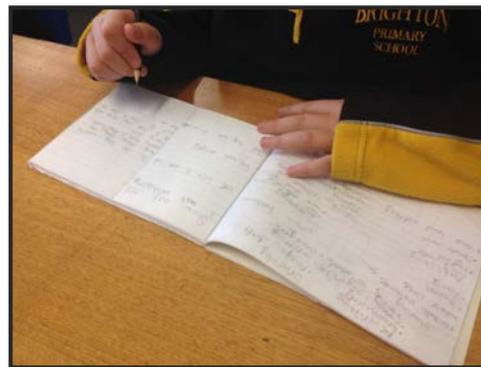
Writing Workshop refers to a *pedagogical stance* as well as a structure for writing lessons in primary, middle and high school settings. It continues the pedagogy of bookmaking that begins in preschool settings. Writing Workshop creates a culture of *thinking like a writer* and sharing this thinking within a community of writers. Teachers who take a Writing Workshop stance create a rigorous learning environment that,

“has its roots in the traditional system in which apprentices learned the skills of their trade by working at the sides of the master craftsmen and women.”

Fletcher & Portalupi (2001) Writing Workshop – The Essential Guide, Heinemann, Portsmouth, p. 2.

Writing Workshop provides the time, quality models, explicit teaching and feedback where novice writers can learn the skills of drafting, revising and editing, along with the fluency, confidence and disposition to see themselves as writers.

‘Bookmaking’ and ‘Writer’s Notebooks’ are both ways to implement the Writing Workshop pedagogy. They are the ‘containers’ for the writing – the pedagogical principles are the same. This makes Writing Workshop a strong whole-school approach as it will grow and evolve with the development of young writers.



Workshop Routines and Rituals:

Mini Lesson – 5-10 minutes for explicit teaching (methodologies might include: Shared Writing, Modelled Writing, Interactive Writing, Think Aloud, Write Out Loud, modelling with Mentor Texts)

Independent Writing – 30-45 minutes devoted to writing. Most teachers build this up gradually from the beginning of the year. Novice writers write on topics they care about and have choice and agency over their writing. Teachers actively conference in 1:1 situations and/or small groups during this time.

Reflection Circle/Share Time – 10-15 minutes where the community of writers gathers again, but with a more open ended conversation than during the mini lesson. Teachers guide and scaffold metacognitive thinking, receiving and giving feedback and support for the challenging task of creating texts that engage the reader.



LISA BURMAN

Content: What is taught in Writing Workshop?

At *Lisa Burman Consultants*, we use the framework of the **6+1 Traits of Writing** (*Ruth Culham, Scholastic, New York, 2003*) to plan and assess the content taught in Writing Workshop. We add to this framework, the habits of writers (things like building writing stamina, keeping writing tools organised, giving and receiving feedback).

- Habits of successful writers (dispositions and identity as writer)
- Organisation
- Ideas
- Voice
- Word choice
- Sentence fluency
- Conventions
- + 1. Presentation (publishing, layout and graphic design)

Pedagogical Practices

Writing Workshop often (but not always) takes an inquiry stance, particularly when teachers and novice writers research the qualities of powerful writing by studying mentor texts together. Other core pedagogical practices employed by the Writing Workshop teacher include the following. Teachers choose the most appropriate pedagogical practice for their goals and learning intentions, using summative and formative assessment to inform their planning for mini lessons, conferences and reflection circle/share times.

- Think Alouds
- Mentor texts – read like a writer
- Modelled Writing – teacher as writer
- Interactive Writing – share the pen
- Shared Writing – shared composing
- Quick Writes
- Write Out Louds
- Turn and Talk/Think-Pair-Share
- 1:1 Conferencing with explicit feedback
- Peer Feedback
- Reflection and goal setting – engaging in metacognitive thinking
- ‘Read Aloud/Quick’ and ‘Fancy’ Publishing

