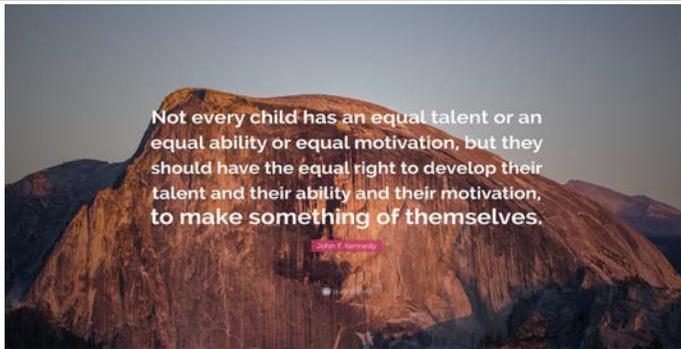


November 2019

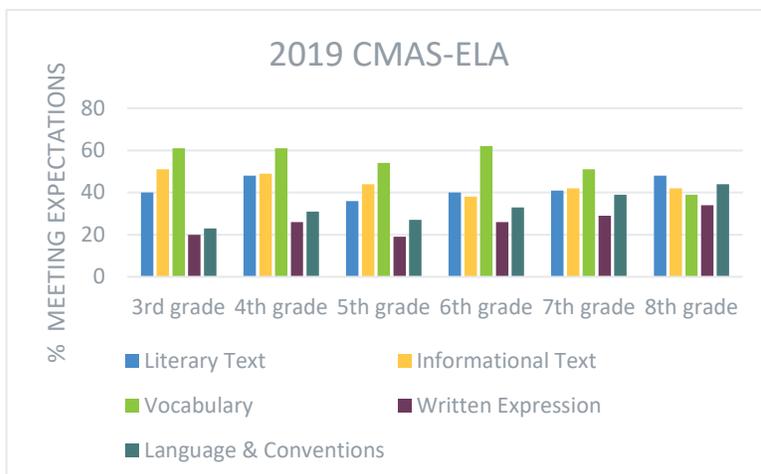


Teaching the “W” in RWC:

In viewing state and national assessment data and changes to legislation targeting the reading proficiency of our students, we, the literacy community, can agree that an introspective examination into the divergent ways in which we teach reading is warranted. However, the modality of literacy often lost or forgotten in the discussion regarding improving the literacy prowess of our students is **writing—the “W” in RWC**.

With an abundance of research and evidence-based practices pointing to the interwoven, interconnected nature for which writing supports reading and reading supports writing, “Why do we continue to forget or ignore the importance of writing?”

Writing data, according to our state assessments, continues to be our “Achilles heel.” It is also the area of literacy for which I consistently receive the most questions and requests for support from pre-service and in-service educators and school and district leaders.



Why is writing important? What are the benefits of cultivating a writing community within our classrooms and schools?

According to Stacey Shultz, co-author of *Welcome to Writing Workshop (K-6)*, *Writing Workshop: Engaging Today’s Students with a Model That Works*, and *Day by Day: Refining Writing Workshop Through 180 Days of Reflective Practice*, when teachers write and model their processes:

- They provide a positive model for our students. Our example says we value writing and find it essential to building the literacy of our students;
- They give ourselves a chance to test our own writing assignments;
- They help demystify the act of writing. Students often think experienced writers find writing easy or have some magic ability to “get it right the first time.” If we share our writing in front of students, they can see what a sloppy, difficult act writing is for all writers—experienced and novice;
- They learn empathy for our students. Writing can be a struggle, and this fact is easy to forget if we don’t wrestle regularly with it ourselves; and,
- They become partners in the community of writers and full participants in our classroom writing workshops. (“Why Teachers Need to Write with Students,” 2019, p. 10)

The caveat to the aforementioned is that teachers need the time, resources, and support of school and district leaders in order to foster a community of writers. “Sustaining a classroom writing community is a yearlong effort. To firmly establish a community of writers, students will need ample time daily for uninterrupted writing, time to talk about their writing processes, time for writerly conversations, time for conferring and collaboration, and time for reflection” (Shultz, 2019, p.12).

Contact Info

If you have any questions, comments, or have suggestions for the monthly newsletter, please contact Olivia Gillespie at gillespie_o@cde.state.co.us or (303) 866-6583.