

# **“Best Practices in Teaching Writing to Adolescents”**

**Dolores Perin, 2007**

**in**

***Best Practices in Writing Instruction***

## **GIST SUMMARY:**

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## **MULTI-PARAGRAPH SUMMARY:**

In the chapter, “Best Practices in Teaching Writing to Adolescents,” Dolores Perin (2007) addresses research-based techniques for middle and high school teachers to improve their writing instruction. In an effort to help teachers better understand the teaching of writing, Perin explains the complexity of the writing process and provides recommendations to teachers. Additionally, she elaborates on the recommendations for content-area writing instruction and addresses the role of student motivation in writing.

One key point that Perin makes is the complex nature of the writing process. “Writing is an extraordinarily complex activity that incorporates thought processes, feelings, and social interaction” (p. 243). The author explores both Hayes’s (1996) comprehensive model of how people write, as well as Bereiter’s (1980) model of developmental writing. Both models include developmental phases of writing progression. Likewise, the author notes that the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) divided students’ ability into similar phases.

Another important idea that Perin highlights includes 11 recommendations for middle and high school teachers. Based on a meta-analysis of research on adolescent literacy instruction, Graham and Perin (2006) offer summaries of each recommendation and explanations of key strategies. The strategies, “intended as an overview of each technique” (p. 248) include example studies, instructional steps and implementation guidelines.

In addition to acknowledging the inherently complex nature of the writing process, as well as providing specific recommendations for teachers, Perin also explores the need for the teaching of writing skills across the disciplines. “Adolescents spend most of the school day in content-area instruction, in which they are expected to absorb and take a critical stance on information” (p. 260). Furthermore, meaningful literacy instruction, Perin explains, builds “students’ self-efficacy for writing” (p. 261). Perin offers practical suggestions for teachers to build confidence during the writing process.

After addressing the multiple skills involved in teaching writing to middle and high school students, Perin provides research-based recommendations for improving the teaching of writing to adolescents, as well as a brief commentary specifically addressing the need for content-area writing instruction. Perrin concludes the chapter with suggestions for improving student motivation in writing.