Benchmark Writer’s Workshop was designed with the belief that all students can become better writers with explicit, gradual-release instruction that is developmentally appropriate for them. A complete bibliography of the research underlying Benchmark Writer’s Workshop is provided in the backmatter of this Teacher’s Resource System.

### BELIEFS ABOUT WRITING INSTRUCTION

Teaching should be writers, mentors, and guides supporting students’ writing development in a risk-free atmosphere of collaboration.

Teachers build on students’ strengths by modeling and gradually releasing the writing process to students.

Every student can become a better writer if teachers provide instruction within their zone of proximal development.

Student choice plays a motivational role in the quality of writing that a student produces. The love of writing helps students to be better writers, and better writers usually become better readers and more successful test-takers.

The writer’s workshop model provides the supportive gradual-release context for students to learn the processes, craft, and conventions of writing.

Listening, speaking, and reading are reciprocal processes that support students’ writing development.

### SUPPORT WITHIN BENCHMARK WRITER’S WORKSHOP

Mini-lessons feature carefully constructed think-alouds that support teachers to establish a mentor relationship in which they share their own writing experiences.

Every mini-lesson follows a focus-rehearse (model-guide) approach that scaffolds students into the independent writing time.

Every mini-lesson includes strategies to adapt instruction to meet the needs of struggling writers and English learners. In addition, Responsive Conferring Prompts to Support and Scaffold Writers help teachers provide individualized feedback based on students’ needs.

In every genre unit of study, students’ own curiosities, interests, and memories feed the brainstorming process. Developing writers are encouraged to write about topics that are meaningful and motivating to them.

Lessons focus not only on the process of writing but also on genre awareness, author’s craft, grammar, conventions, and research.

Every mini-lesson incorporates the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.