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

- Teachers 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.