

**Table 1. Dumb Things Versus Sensible Things in Writing Instruction**

Dumb Things	Sensible Things
Using worksheets	Practicing new skills in writing created by the student
Giving Friday spelling tests	Developing control over spelling words by using multiple methods, such as high-frequency words, word families, phonetics, sight words, spell-check, and other resources
Assigning vocabulary lists	Exploring word meanings and developing a fascination for language
Prescribing formats, such as topic sentence plus three supporting details, and five-paragraph essays	Allowing the ideas to determine the organization, based on the purpose for the writing
Teaching skills in isolation	Teaching in the context of reading, skill by skill, always moving toward deepening understanding of text
Assigning topics every time students write	Providing choice in format, genre, and mode
Grading based on compliance and following directions	Evaluating based on performance, noting growth, and celebrating effort
Covering everything every year	Using a spiraling scope and sequence of writing skills that builds one year upon the next
Writing in absolute quiet	Creating a happy, working classroom in which students freely share, ask questions, and discuss
Dwelling on test preparation	Teaching the test format as a genre of reading and writing
Marking papers for every possible thing that could be improved or corrected	Offering small, focused suggestions for revision and editing
Teaching writing as an isolated subject that consists mostly of grammar and other conventional practices	Teaching reading and writing together as mutually supportive language processes, one leading to the next