

INNOVATIONS FOR IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS:

To help meet the writing crisis, Willard Wirtz, former Secretary of Labor, has suggested the following innovations for improving writing skills:

1) From the fourth or fifth grade through the twelfth, students should be assigned the daily homework (eventually in every course) of writing one paragraph about something. This work would be read first at home by a parent, if one is available, and then read by the teacher or an assistant and returned with at least one sentence of written advice to the student. Furthermore teaching writing should be recognized as part of the responsibility of **all** teachers — and of those parents who can help.

2) No more than half the testing material given students should be of the “objective answer” variety. Moreover, college admission should be contingent at least as much on some form of written exercise or examination as on the results of objective tests.

3) It should become standard practice in all serious situations, for whatever kind of employment, to require the applicant to write at least a few lines of prose — or, for more intellectually demanding occupations, poetry. (National Conference Series, American Association for Higher Education, 1978)

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