

# Collins Writing Exchange

Ideas, Tips, and Resources on Writing from Collins Education Associates

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## A Note to Our Readers

### There's Light at the End of the Tunnel: New PD & Resources for Transitioning to Normalcy

**"It's important for you to understand that your experience facing and overcoming  
adversity is actually one of your biggest advantages."**

**Michelle Obama**

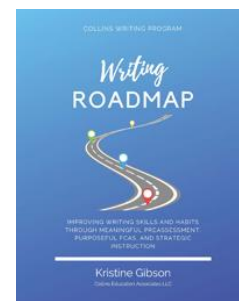
2016 Commencement Speech  
City College, New York

The past year has certainly been one of adversity! But we have taken advantage of this opportunity to rethink the way we support teachers and schools and to develop an exciting new set of [options for professional development](#) (PD) and improvement in writing instruction.

## COMING SOON! Writing Roadmap

[Sign up now](#) to receive the FREE preview of the Writing Roadmap package as soon as it becomes available. You'll receive it in plenty of time to be up and running for the new school year.

Writing Roadmap, formerly Write Back to School, is designed to improve writing skills and habits through meaningful preassessment and strategic, follow-on instruction. The expanded product includes everything teachers need to diagnose writing strengths and weaknesses and to plan purposeful assignments and instruction for the school year. Collins Associate Kristine Gibson's upgraded package of resources includes:



- **Prompts and Instructions (grades [K-2](#), [3-5](#), [6-12](#))**

- **Diagnostic Rubrics and Class Checklists**
- **Writing Habits Checklist and Guide**
- **Scored and Annotated Student Writing [Samples](#)**

## **NEW COURSE!** Introduction to the Collins Writing Program

This online course was developed in collaboration with CIU10 in Pennsylvania and consists of six one-hour virtual sessions designed for self-paced, asynchronous learning. The brand-new offering is ideal for teachers who are new to Collins Writing or who would like a review. Topics include a detailed overview of all Five Types of Writing and a discussion of instructional practices that improve writing skills in all content areas.

For more information visit [collinsed.ciu10.org](http://collinsed.ciu10.org). Single-user and multi-user [licenses](#) are available.

[Click here for a video preview](#) of the course with Dr. Collins.

## **PLAN AHEAD!** Assessing a Collins Writing Implementation

Looking to beef up your Collins Writing practice, but not sure where to start? [Contact us](#) to learn about our new Collins Implementation Survey. The survey responses will help you design the perfect professional development plan for your staff, whether it includes whole staff training on an identified topic or small group work on a variety of different topics. Our survey will help you identify school-wide needs and take action to make positive changes in your writing culture.

Try our [quick self-assessment](#) now for a sampling of survey questions at the Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced levels. For the full survey, [contact us](#) or reach out to your Collins consultant for more details.

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## **Featured Writing Assignment**

# Wrap Up the Year with Letters to Next Year's Teacher

This end-of-the-year assignment is a fun and enduring favorite of both teachers and students. It provides students with a framework for reflecting on their work and challenges them to analyze their writing and provide evidence of growth.

Use the assignments below to guide your students to examine and reflect on past work.

- **[Primary:](#)** Writing a Letter to Next Year's Teacher
- **[Elementary:](#)** A Letter to Next Year's Teacher About Your Own Writing

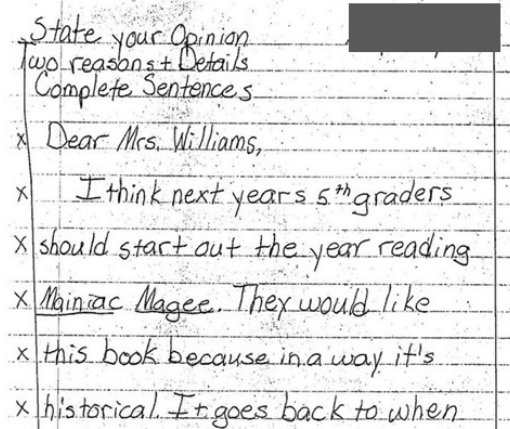
- **Middle School:** Presenting a Mini-Portfolio to Next Year's Teacher
- **High School:** Letter to Next Year's Teacher (and possibly others)

## Tip of the Month

# Save Those Papers!

Student writing samples are a high-impact resource that can be used to model well-executed strategies, help students identify and correct common errors, and build revising and editing skills. There's no better time than now to start collecting samples to use with next year's classes.

Between now and the last day of school, flag and save standout papers (both the strong ones and those that reflect a common error) that are on your desk or in your online classroom. Develop a system for saving and labeling these papers for future use. Next year, when it's time to teach students how to write introductory paragraphs, edit for comma usage, or add elaboration to their writing, you'll be glad you did!



## Administrator's Corner

# Speaking of Past Papers: School-wide Paper Reviews

In a recent Phi Delta Kappa article, "Developing Accomplished Writers: Lessons from Recent Research," Steve Benjamin and Michael Wagner propose research-based strategies for improving student writing through clear, step-by-step modeling. This technique goes hand-in-hand with another CEA favorite: using past student papers to teach new skills. Whether teachers create their own models or use papers that they've collected from students, the key is providing opportunities for students to analyze good (and not-so-good) writing and observe the process of writing, revising, and editing in action.

One of the best and most underused PD activities is gathering teachers to review samples of student work. This works on many levels: It helps calibrate writing expectations at and across grade levels while cutting down on subjectivity; it helps teachers identify common problem areas and gaps in writing instruction; it provides teachers with a bank of student samples to use for modeling and class analyses; and it builds teachers' comfort level with writing. According to Benjamin and Wagner, "... those teachers who struggle with their own writing tend to learn, in a nonthreatening environment, how they can improve not only their student's writing but also their own."

The end of the school year, when teachers have a wealth of student writing samples at their disposal, is the perfect time to facilitate a paper review session with your staff. See our [quick tips](#) for facilitating a school- or department-wide paper review session on your own or [contact us](#) to schedule a session with one of our consultants.

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## Quick Links

**NEW! TEST YOUR  
COLLINS  
EXPERTISE**

**Try a sample of our quick self-assessment survey to review basic, intermediate, and advanced Collins implementation strategies.**

**PD OPTIONS &  
WORKSHOPS**

**From basic to expert—everything you need to know about our PD options, workshops, institutes, and graduate courses.**

**FREE  
RESOURCES**

**Ready-to-use Type Threes, Focus Correction Area lists, graphic organizers, and more!**

**ESSENTIAL  
CONVENTIONS**

**Check Mate™ and other resources to tackle teachers' biggest writing pet peeves!**

**EXCHANGE  
ARCHIVE**

**All previous newsletters with FREE writing assignments in every edition!**

**PUBLIC PD  
SCHEDULE**

**Upcoming live and online events in your area**

[Website](#)

[Contact Us](#)



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*COLLINS WRITING PROGRAM*

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