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First Things First: Writing Strategies -- Writers are Readers

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FIRST THINGS FIRST: WRITING STRATEGIES

Marilyn L. Grady

Writers are Readers

The inspiration for writing is reading. By reading a wide range of authors, you enhance your writing craft. Reading is the window to different writing styles, different uses of language, and different means of engaging the reader.

There are a number of very successful writers in the field of education. Their success is measured by their name recognition and the prominence of what they have written. If you see a name in print frequently, then you have a measure of a writer's success. Reading these authors provides insight into what is publishable in education outlets.

However, do not limit your reading to education. Read broadly to enrich your knowledge of writing technique. Reading the classics, the best sellers, and prominent books in disciplines that align well with education such as politics, sociology, communication, public relations, business, health and wellness may open additional avenues for you as you develop your writing skills.

“Writers learn to write by imitation.” (Kooser & Cox, 2006, p. 41) We want as many models of writing as possible. We want models of those who have been successful, and hopefully, prolific authors. We want models of the best. Using the writing styles of successful authors, it may be possible to identify a template for writing. A template, a format, a formula, or a habit may be helpful in structuring your writing.

One of the most important types of reading for writers is books about writing. Develop a reading habit that includes books about writing. Perhaps every six months you should read such a book. A first book you might want to read is *Writing brave & free: Encouraging words for people who want to start writing* (2006). Written by Ted Kooser, the U.S. Poet Laureate and winner of the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry, and Steve Cox, an editor and publisher, it provides the inspiration you need to continue writing!

References

- Kooser, T., & Cox, S. (2006). *Writing brave & free: Encouraging words for people who want to start writing*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.