Best Practices in Teaching Writing: An Outline
Charles Whitaker, Ph.D.

1. **Establish a positive atmosphere for writing, reading, and learning by:**
   - Creating an inviting classroom with flexible seating, accessible resources, and attractive surroundings
   - Modeling respect
   - Sharing your own writing with students
   - Establishing routines and expectations

2. **Organize for writing by:**
   - Setting up a writing workshop structure
   - Using writer’s notebooks
   - Selecting a meaningful approach to writing based on an understanding of students, experience, and professional recommendations

3. **Arrange for meaningful-to-students reasons to write by:**
   - Promoting student choice and ownership
   - Providing opportunities for authentic writing and publishing

4. **Ensure that students read, respond to, and use a variety of materials written for a variety of purposes and audiences by:**
   - Giving reading a role in the writing classroom
   - Using reading materials to model writing
   - Providing diverse reading materials

5. **Write regularly across the curriculum and grade levels.**

6. **Arrange for students to have constructive response to their writing and to offer response to other writers by:**
   - Making response an integral part of writing instruction
   - Meeting the needs of student writers through response
   - Providing selective responses that do not overwhelm the students
   - Responding throughout the writing process
   - Using a variety of techniques for response including informal and formal student-teacher conferences, peer conferences, response forms, whole-class responses, and self-assessments

7. **Provide opportunities for students to collaborate as writers, thinkers, and learners by:**
   - Using a variety of collaboration techniques such as furniture placement, modeling collaboration, providing checklists and forms, and organizing writing partnerships or small groups
   - Providing guidelines including demonstrations of appropriate interactions and creating specific tasks for students to accomplish during their collaborations

8. **Conduct effective mini-lessons on writing by:**
   - Choosing subjects that relate to students’ needs as well as curriculum and/or assessment needs
   - Structuring mini-lessons so students can observe, discuss, and practice the targeted skills or strategies