

# Collins Program Newsletter

## Don't Forget Collins!

Don't forget that the Collins Writing Program is a crucial component of Bassick High School's academic improvement program. All teachers should be implementing the program in their classes. In general, students should be doing some writing several times a week in every class: mostly Type One and Type Two writing, but at least two Type Three or Four per marking period for most content area classes.

## General Program Guidelines

- Place guidelines for the five types of writing in a conspicuous place in your classroom. You can get Collins posters from Mr. Brackett in 254, although the supply is limited.
- Always tell the students what type of writing they will be doing, and for Type Three and Four, be sure to give them the FCAs

Bassick High School  
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Walter Brackett,  
Program Coordinator

## The Dreaded Type Four

Most instructors find Type One and Two writing relatively painless to introduce to students. Type three assignments require a little more work on the teacher's part, but with a little practice, it's easy to get comfortable with assigning and grading Type Three compositions.

Type Four is a different matter, and for one reason: peer editing. Peer editing is frightening because of the classroom management issues it might create. For example, what if you have students who refuse to peer edit? How do you keep students on task when peer editing? There are pedagogical questions as well; for example, does peer editing really work?

Let's address the last question first. Both students and teachers may have trouble seeing the value of peer editing. From the student's perspective, what is to be gained by

the writer understand whether what he or she has written is clear and understandable. Assuming that the peer editor is capable of reading, he or she can provide useful feedback.

To address questions of classroom management, it is important to follow a strict procedure when peer editing. I have found that when students misbehave, either I am not engaged with them sufficiently or there is no clear procedure for them to follow. The clear procedure for peer editing a Type Four composition consists of five steps:

1. One student reads his or her composition aloud in a "one-foot voice" while the peer editor listens and takes notes. The composition stays in the hands of the writer!
2. Once the student is finished reading, the peer editor and writer discuss the composition, focusing on three questions: (1) Did I complete the assignment? (2) Does it