

Brainstorm for middle:

“This truth may come off as uncomfortable to acknowledge but the real problem is not the low writing skills of our kids; the real problem belongs to the well-meaning but misguided educators who are unintentionally setting our students up for failure” (Sitomer).

*Claim it! Cite it! Cement it!*

This is important because it allows me the ability to express the importance of slowing down the writing process and using writing workshop. If students haven't been shown during their education how to arrive at a finished paper, then they will be ill-equipped to hand in writing to the best of their capabilities. Writing workshop is imperative in allowing students to confidently build their writing skills.

Topic sentence idea: American students struggle to create the writing being demanded of them.

*Alright, great! Now, let's look out how I could construct that into an entire page of my research paper. (See following page.)*

Children know from a very young age that their teachers expect them to produce quality writing. However, it seems that while this expectation is continuously brought up, the specifications of what makes writing *great* are left to be assumed by students, who may not know what they need to do in order to hand in their best writing. Few teachers assign students the time to work independently in class (with guided objectives) to analyze and work through what this expectation and process looks like. In fact, many educators wait until the final product is handed in to give feedback, at which point most commentary regarding the improvement of writing is lost. Typically, students do not absorb their teacher's remarks or take those ideas with them into their next paper. On the other hand, if a teacher can provide positive and negative criticism throughout the writing process, students can gain new insights and incorporate those skills into their paper while they are still working on it.

The realization that not enough time has been spent in the classroom on the writing process may be hard to swallow, and it can certainly be disconcerting to realize as a teacher. This problem is discussed in *Claim it! Cite it! Cement it!* Indeed, it may be “uncomfortable to acknowledge [this truth that] the real problem is not the low writing skills of our kids; the real problem belongs to the well-meaning but misguided educators who are unintentionally setting our students up for failure” (Sitomer 9). Sitomer points out that as educators, we must understand what our students' struggles and successes are if we wish to grow them as writers. If our kids cannot master sentences or direct citations on their own, then those are the skills that must be conquered first. If we know our students haven't perfected these tasks, how can we ever assume they can write varied, complex, and enriching essays? Understanding our students' writing from this perspective opens the door for writing workshop, a beautifully effective way for students to safely work on their writing while having their teacher nearby to help them through major

setbacks they can't overcome on their own. In this capacity, the misguided educators Sitomer mentioned can learn how to individually help their students, and become expert teachers who have the skillset to enrich their students' lives as writers.