

# Creating Boy-Friendly Writing Classrooms

by Ralph Fletcher

- \*Get boys excited about writing. Worry about their engagement first; the quality will come later.
- \*Give them real choice about what to write and how to write about it.
- \*Show an interest in what subjects your boys are passionate about. These often make great topics for writing.
- \*Be more accepting of violence in writing (with commonsense limits).
- \*Celebrate the quirky humor in boys' writing. (Humor = Voice)
- \*Give boys specific praise during writing conferences.
- \*Don't overwhelm boys with too many revision suggestions.
- \*Don't insist that students revise everything they write.
- \*Make room for genres that engage boys: fiction, fantasy, sports writing, spoofs/parodies, comics/graphic novels, nonfiction, etc.
- \*Allow upper-grade students opportunities to draw while composing.
- \*Messy handwriting is a developmental issue that affects many boys. Don't take it personally. Allow students to keyboard when possible.
- \*Talk about the writer's notebook as a place to collect important "stuff" including odd facts, artifacts, quotes, lyrics, and drawings.
- \*Include mentor texts that appeal to boys: Knucklehead by Jon Scieszka, for example.
- \*Show an interest in the writing boys do at home, for fun.

**BOY WRITERS: Reclaiming Their Voices by Ralph Fletcher (Stenhouse).**

\*Be inclusive about what writing you allow kids to read out loud. If only sincere, realistic, emotional pieces get shared, boys will turn off.

\*Don't be surprised if boys view other boys as their main audience.

\*Take the long view. Be patient. Don't expect great writing right away.