Pen/cil to Paper

Writing to Learn

Structured student opportunities to employ writing to make sense of new learning

ELPS 1B. 1C. 1F. All of Strand 5
IP Rubric I-1, I-2, I-4, I-6, I-8

- How can I use writing to help my students learn?
- How can I get them to generate their own ideas?
- How can I help them remember new information?

Why it works:

Informal writing may be thought of as "writing to learn" rather than "learning to write." By **interacting with text** and **expanding the learning** with informal writing across all content areas, students further their writing skills and later apply them to formal writing. Ways to engage students is to integrate writing with structured peer conversations and the use of sentence stems/paragraph frames to help them internalize new learning, make connections, and develop academic language.

Suggested strategies:

Graphic Organizers/Thinking Maps
Exit Ticket
What to Do
Introduce New Learning
Structured Peer Conversations
Academic Language
Assess Mastery
Pacing Tools
Determine and Track Student Progress

Tech tools:

Onenote.com
Edublogs.org
Padlet.com
Chalk Talk
Lead4Ward

In the **Pen/cil to Paper** routine, we regularly:

- ☑ Plan to model informal writing consistently throughout the lesson in all content areas.
- ☑ Prepare for writing with structured conversations.
- ☑ Scaffold with sentence stems and paragraph frames.
- ☑ Model all "writing to learn" tasks.
- ☑ Circulate and coach as students write.
- ☑ Assess student writing.

*   *In addition to informal writing to learn, all students must develop their formal writing skills within each content area in genres such as lab reports, essays, and/or research papers.*

Classroom implementation:

☑ **Plan to model for informal writing consistently throughout the lesson in all content areas.**

Plan how students will express their thinking with informal writing tasks aligned with the standards throughout the lesson cycle. Tasks could include **quick writes**, **graphic organizers**/**Thinking Maps**, **Cornell Notes**, **interactive notebooks**, **learning logs**, **journals**, and/or **exit tickets**. During planning, create content-aligned writing prompts, clearly define **what to do**, and provide **word banks** with **visuals**, and **sentence stems** and **paragraph frames**.

☑ **Prepare for writing with structured peer conversations.**

When you **introduce new learning** with writing tasks, have students generate ideas through **structured peer conversations** and **peer writing** before writing individually. Refer to the **Let's Talk** routine for tips on how to create **structured peer conversations**, and let the students know when you plan to follow a **structured peer conversation** with individual writing.

> **Paragraph Frame:**
>
> __ and __ share important similarities, but they are also different. One way they are similar is __. Another similarity is __. Despite these similarities, __ is different from ___ because ___.
>
> **Sentence Stem:**
>
> I agree (disagree) with __ because __.

☑ **Scaffold with sentence stems and paragraph frames.**

To differentiate, post and model the use of word bank, **graphic organizers**/Thinking Maps, **sentence stems** or **paragraph frames** when introducing the writing task. Students could also participate in a silent **Chalk Talk** or **Padlet.com** conversation.
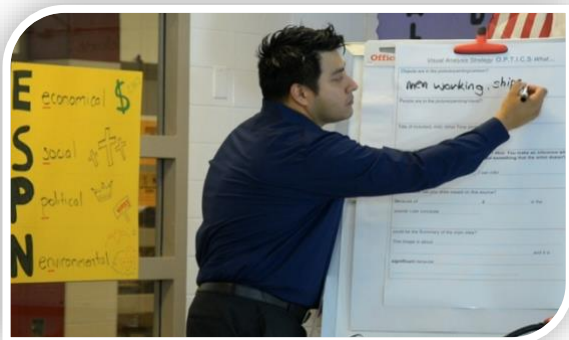
☑ **Model all "writing to learn" tasks.**

Plan how you will **model** using **Turn the Light On** to show how to approach new writing tasks. Use **academic language** and key vocabulary using **visuals** as you model capturing your thoughts in writing.

☑ **Circulate and coach as students write.**

Provide quiet time for students to write using **pacing tools**. Scan student writing as you circulate. Use **Do I Really Get It?** and **Huddle** to prompt students to write in complete sentences, use **academic language**, and expand their thinking as needed.

☑ **Assess student writing.**

Treat informal writing as formative assessment and **assess mastery**. Give quick, precise, and warm **written feedback** on selected student writing on a regular basis, so students can apply it to formal writing. **Determine and track student progress** in articulating their understanding of content. Save samples of students' writing in student **portfolio** to monitor progress.