Tips & Strategies to Support English Learners with Process Writing, Gr. 3-8

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Ready to Write!

CABE Conference 2015
Did You Know?

- There are more than 1.4 million English learners in California public schools.
- More than 2.68 million students speak a language other than English in their homes.
- California holds all students to the same rigorous grade-level academic standards.
- English learners are learning English, learning about English, and learning through English.


What can we do to support the English literacy development of our EL students?
ALL Students Writing: ELA & ELD

Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways

A. Collaborative
1. Exchanging information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics
2. Interacting with others in written English in various communicative forms (print, communicative technology, and multimedia)
3. Offering and supporting opinions and negotiating with others in communicative exchanges
4. Adapting language choices to various contexts (based on task, purpose, audience, and text type)

B. Interpretive
5. Listening actively to spoken English in a range of social and academic contexts
6. Reading closely literary and informational texts and viewing multimedia to determine how meaning is conveyed explicitly and implicitly through language
7. Evaluating how well writers and speakers use language to support ideas and opinions with details or reasons depending on modality, text type, purpose, audience, topic, and content area
8. Analyzing how writers and speakers use vocabulary and other language resources for specific purposes (to explain, persuade, entertain, etc.) depending on modality, text type, purpose, audience, topic, and content area

C. Productive
9. Expressing information and ideas in formal oral presentations on academic topics
10. Writing literary and informational texts to present, describe, and explain ideas and information, using appropriate technology
11. Supporting own opinions and evaluating others’ opinions in speaking and writing
12. Selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary and other language resources to effectively convey ideas

Part II: Learning About How English Works

A. Structuring Cohesive Texts
1. Understanding text structure
2. Understanding cohesion

B. Expanding and Enriching Ideas
3. Using verbs and verb phrases
4. Using nouns and noun phrases
5. Modifying to add details

C. Connecting and Condensing Ideas
6. Connecting ideas
7. Condensing ideas

Part III: Using Foundational Literacy Skills
Why is writing important?

What they said…

- “So I can understand….”
- “Because I want to get good grades.”
- “It makes other people know what I think.”
- “It helps me prove my point.”
- “It can help me solve a problem.”
- “It teaches [me] new things.”
- “It helps you do a speech.”
- “You can share your thoughts [with] people.”
- “It can make the world a better place.”
“Writing can be taught earlier than once believed—you don’t have to wait until the student has developed high levels of English proficiency.”

ColorínColorado.org, 2007
Do you…

- invite students to draw & discuss?
- model writing?
- write in front of your students, across stages of the writing process?
- “share the pen” with students?
- use other authors’ writing to show examples of craft?
- offer explicit instruction in composition & conventions?
- provide differentiated instruction and feedback in regard to writing?
- teach writing, in addition to assigning it?
What are some of the challenges our English Learners encounter when producing their own writing?
Which text type first for ELs?

- Benefit of **NARRATIVE** first:
  
  *We all have stories to tell…*

- Benefit of **INFORMATIONAL** first:
  
  *Students can use chunks drawn from the texts they read to use in their own writing*

- Benefit of **OPINION** (up through grade 5) first:
  
  *Students can draw from their own preferences*
Process Writing

- Planning/Prewriting
- Draft
- Revise
- Edit
- Publish & Share
Oral Rehearsal

- Students can’t respond in writing if they’ve never spoken the words or practiced the academic language they’ll need to write.

(Dr. Kate Kinsella, Visalia, CA, Oct. 2014)

From where?
- Oral language development
- Practice speaking what they’ll write before they write
- Vocabulary & academic language structures
- Mentor texts
Labeling

Captioning the Picture: Write as many sentences about this picture as you can.

There are many houses in the town.
There are many grassy fields.
I think there is many people.
There is no honor.
The houses in the town look different.
There is a town.
There is a river.
There is a bridge when there.
The houses in the town are more then go houses.
The lake is on the left.
There is a wall in the castle.
There is people.
There are two bridges.
There are some birds.
There is a church.
There are some roads.
There are lots of animals.
There are a mill.
There are lots of fields.
The fields look like a square.
There are three or 10 people.
There are about 16 animals.
There are houses.
The house is long in the other houses.
The house out of the town all look similar.
There are about 3 summers.
Building Sentences from Labels

- Building vocabulary in a shared setting
- Model joining words and phrases to form more complex language structures
- Moving from words, phrases, and simple sentences to varied sentences and writing volume.

Cat, whiskers ➔ The cat has whiskers.

Build a sentence:

There are people on the bridge.
There are two bridges. ➔
There is a river.
There are some boats.
Things Close to My Heart
Use the Seeds of Experience
Allow students to draw on their background.

Family gatherings

• **Narrative**: A time when my family got together for a special party

• **Informational**: A tradition shared by my family

• **Opinion**: In my opinion, all families should have special traditions they share…
SKETCH...

NARRATIVE:
Moments I Come From

- Why does it matter?
- What did I learn?
- Why should I share these stories with others?
Talk across Fingers before Writing

Students think about the topic and point to a finger for each key idea as they orally rehearse your writing topic.

First...
Next...
Then...
After that...
Finally...

I’ll write about...
I’ll also tell about...
Then, I’ll write...
Sketch to Write:
A “Living” Graphic Organizer

Sketch the page, touch, and tell what writer will be saying in that part of the story. After talking and planning, the writer is set to draft.

“In this part, I’ll tell about…”
List: Expert Topics

- Reduce cognitive load
- Honor students’ own experiences & expertise
- Introduce before research

Think, Write, Talk

- I can write about ____________.
- I am an expert (at) _________________.
- I could write about _________________.
- I am considering writing about _________________.
- Of the many things I know, I think I may write about _____________.
- I am prepared to teach others about ___________ through my writing.
Developing the Topic

Table of Contents

- Planning tool
- Structure for the text
- Helps maintain focus
Sketch the Page/Graphic Organizer
Using Mentor Texts

Notice what authors do and why

Bird Watch

Come look at flamingos with me. We'll see what these birds need to live.
By Felicity Arengo

1. I see the flamingos take off. They use their wings to fly over my head. I wonder where they’re going. I watch them.

2. Look, the flamingos fly to a lake. They land in the water. Then they walk in the water. I watch to see why they came here.

3. I see a flamingo and its chick. They're in a nest made of mud. The nest keeps the chick out of the water. It keeps the chick safe.

4. Now, I know why the flamingos come here. They find water, food, and safe places. They get what they need to survive.

Fast Fact: The food a flamingo eats turns its feathers pink and orange.
Language to Leverage

- Primary language
- Cognates
- Use routines to introduce new vocabulary
- Apply new vocabulary in context
- Provide stems and frames, when appropriate
- L2 content word bank
Paragraph Frames

- Did you know ___________________? It’s true that ____________ and __________. In addition, _________________.
  You might be surprised to learn that _____________________.
  It is also interesting that _________________. There is so much to learn about __________.

- Did you know that spiders are not insects? It’s true that they are arachnids and they have eight legs. In addition, spiders have three main body parts called the head, the thorax, and the abdomen. You might be surprised to learn that spiders have more eyes than humans. It is also interesting that spiders lay eggs. There is so much to learn about spiders.

How can a paragraph or sentence frame
• help a writer?
• hinder a writer?
But what about…

Grammar and conventions?

Students don’t develop the ability to apply grammar correctly in expressive interactions by doing mechanical drills because the drills are decontextualized from meaning and use.

nclrc.org, 2014

Ex.

Teaching how to write a personal narrative?

➤ Opportunity to teach personal pronouns or past-tense verbs

Mora-Flores, 2009

Teaching informational writing in the form of biography?

➤ Opportunity to teach past-tense verbs
Writing

- Opportunity to get to know your students
- Students can show what they know
- Students develop voice and agency
- Gain insight into a student’s handle on language
- Hear what they’re thinking when they talk out loud in preparation for and during writing
Student writers...

- write at different rates
- may be in a different stage of the writing process as their peers
- require differentiated instruction and individual, specific, timely feedback
- benefit from the encouragement of an audience
- benefit from explicit instruction in writing
- need time, space, and occasion to write
What will you try?

Revisit your handout. Complete the right side of the table under “Ideas I’ll Try to Support and Scaffold.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges ELs Encounter in Writing</th>
<th>Ideas I’ll Try to Support &amp; Scaffold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Think and write here first.)</td>
<td>(Complete this at the end of the session)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• academic language</td>
<td>• frames, content word bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• planning before writing</td>
<td>• oral language rehearsal: talking across finders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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