



## Writing: A Tool for Thinking & Learning Reading Institute for Academic Preparation

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1



## What We Know About Writing

- Write **everything you know** and **all the questions** you have about the kinds of writing done by adults in your discipline.
- This is personal writing; just **start writing** and **keep writing**. Let your thinking flow from your mind through your pen onto the paper.
- If you get stuck, repeat what you've written, write "I've run out of things to say," or complain. **But try to keep your pen moving**.
- **10 minutes**

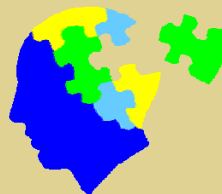
2



## What We Know About Writing

- How many of you found that, as you wrote, one idea led to another?

THE ASSOCIATIVE POWER OF WRITING



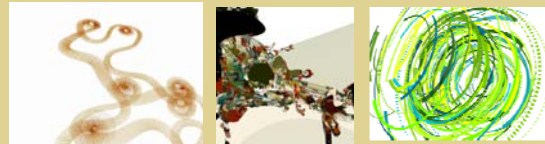
3



## What We Know About Writing

- How many of you "discovered" new ideas as you wrote?

THE GENERATIVE POWER OF WRITING



4

## Just Do It!

- Let's hear how differently people did this. Volunteers?
  - Read **EXACTLY** what you've written.
  - Skip any embarrassing "side-trips."
- What differences did you hear?
- What characterizes the language and style in this kind of writing?



5



## What We Know About Writing

- If you put your writing away for two weeks and didn't think about it, how many of think you'd be able to reconstruct much of today's thinking from your writing?



6



## What We Know About Writing

WRITING MAKES THINKING CONCRETE.  
WRITING MAKES THINKING AVAILABLE FOR  
DISCUSSION, REVISION, EXTENTION.



7

## Theory to Practice

- Quickwrite (5 minutes): What are the potential benefits for using the associative and generative powers of writing in YOUR classroom?
- What have you accomplished by writing your ideas down?
- What have I accomplished by asking you to do so?

8

## Writing To Think and Learn

- Useful in EVERY subject area.
- A pedagogical tool.

9

## Writing To Think and Learn

*"We include writing across the curriculum not to add more work to an already crowded curriculum but to improve the learning of content. Writing is not used in content areas so that students will improve their writing skills, but because students understand content better when writing becomes part of their learning activities"*

—Rhoda J. Maxwell. *Writing Across the Curriculum in Middle and High Schools*

10



## Terms for Talking About Writing to Learn

- Expressive writing (Britton)
- Freewriting/Quick writes (Elbow)
  - Unfocused freewriting
  - Focused freewriting
- Writer-based prose and reader-based prose (Flower)

11

## What ALL Teachers Should Know about Writing

- Processes
- Discipline-specific genres and audiences
- Pattern of development (and instruction):

Fluency  
↓  
Form  
↓  
Correctness



12



## Key Terms for Talking About Writing

- Expressive Writing
  - Transactional Writing
  - Poetic Writing
- } James Britton

15



## Key Terms for Talking About Writing

- Journal or Learning Log
- Reading Response
- Dialogue Journal (Double-entry Journal)
- Process Log



16



## Keep in Mind...

- Much writing-to-learn is **WRITER-BASED PROSE** (freewriting). As such, it cannot and should not be evaluated by the same standards used for transactional or reader-based prose.
- Often you won't have time to read all of it...but you **MUST** use it for students to take it seriously.



17



## Keep in Mind...

- Use a *credit/no credit* system or simply comment on the ideas expressed and their value.
- Students can use these writings as beginnings for transactional writing.



18

## Improving Student Performance

- Focusing on **WRITING** is key to improving student performance in **ALL** subject areas.



19