

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM BECAUSE ALL TEACHERS TEACH WRITING

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CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum	1
The Value of Writing Across the Curriculum	1
Why Is This Book Important?	2
Discovery Writing	3
Issues in Content-Area Writing	5
How to Use This Book	7
References	8
Chapter 2: Organizing Classrooms for Writing in Content Areas	9
Finding a Place for Writing in Content Classes	9
Topics and Time	16
Classroom Organizational Issues	17
Author Groups	19
Peer Conferencing	19
Teachers Provide Ongoing Feedback to Students	20
Teachers Write with Students	20
Recognizing Students' Personal Writing Processes	20
References	20
Chapter 3: Seeking, Recording, and Organizing Information	21
The Information Search	21
Mini-Lessons: Seeking Information on the Internet	22
<i>Activity 1: Key word searches</i>	22
<i>Activity 2: Assessing the quality of information</i>	24
<i>Activity 3: Developing questions for interviews</i>	25
Mini-Lessons: Recording Information	27
<i>Activity 1: Selecting relevant information</i>	27
<i>Activity 2: Three forms of note taking</i>	28
Mini-Lessons: Organizing Information	35
<i>Activity 1: K-W-L</i>	35
<i>Activity 2: Using compare/contrast charts</i>	36
<i>Activity 3: Developing outlines</i>	38
References	41

Sample Pages

Chapter 4: Writing Using Non-Narrative Forms Across the Curriculum	43
Why Write Non-Narrative in Content Areas?	43
Ideas for Writing Non-Narrative Across the Curriculum	44
Non-Narrative, Non-Poetic Forms: A Short List	45
Helping Students Become Better Non-Narrative Writers and Learn Content Knowledge	46
Mini-Lessons: Getting to Know the Possibilities and Demands of Genres	46
<i>Activity 1: Introducing a variety of genres</i>	46
<i>Activity 2: Identifying features of non-narrative that informs</i>	47
<i>Activity 3: Identifying features of non-narrative forms that persuade</i>	51
<i>Activity 4: Identifying features of non-narrative that instructs/directs</i>	54
Mini-Lessons: Content and Organization	58
<i>Activity 1: Maintaining a focus</i>	58
<i>Activity 2: Supporting the main point with examples and details</i>	59
<i>Activity 3: Including quotes from references</i>	61
<i>Activity 4: Audience awareness: Using elements of graphic design</i>	64
References	66
Chapter 5: Writing Poetry Across the Curriculum	67
Why Write Poetry in Content Areas?	67
Ideas for Writing Poetry Across the Curriculum	68
Helping Students Become Better Poetry Writers	69
Mini-Lessons: Meaning and Music Tools	70
<i>Activity 1: Experimenting with line breaks</i>	70
<i>Activity 2: Using repetition of words, sounds, or lines</i>	72
<i>Activity 3: Creating images of concrete experiences</i>	75
<i>Activity 4: Writing titles</i>	77
Mini-Lessons: Staying Lean and Removing the Extra Layers	78
<i>Activity 1: Creating a list poem on overhead transparency strips</i>	78
<i>Activity 2: Two-voice poems: Compare and contrast information</i>	79
<i>Activity 3: Distilling poems from paragraphs</i>	81
<i>Activity 4: Writing from content-area vocabulary lists</i>	81
References	83
Chapter 6: Writing Narrative Across the Curriculum	85
Why Write Narrative in Content Areas?	85
Ideas for Writing Narrative Across the Curriculum	86
Helping Students Become Better Narrative Writers and Learn Content Knowledge	88

Sample Pages

Mini-Lessons: Weaving Content Knowledge into Stories	88
<i>Activity 1: Adapting familiar story lines and giving examples</i>	89
<i>Activity 2: Using plot to communicate content knowledge</i>	91
<i>Activity 3: Using character and setting to communicate content knowledge</i>	93
Mini-Lessons: Developing Characters, Plot, and Style	95
<i>Activity 1: Allowing characters to lead the way</i>	95
<i>Activity 2: Developing characters and plot through dialogue</i>	98
<i>Activity 3: The challenge of details</i>	101
<i>Activity 4: Beginnings (leads) and endings</i>	104
<i>Activity 5: Showing and not telling: Using films</i>	106
References	107
Chapter 7: Teaching Writing Conventions Across the Curriculum	109
Yes, We All Teach Writing Conventions	109
Teaching Writing Conventions	110
Mini-Lessons: Direct Teaching of Writing Conventions	111
<i>Activity 1: Inductive teaching to differentiate words that sound/look similar, but have different meanings: Focus on it's and its</i>	112
<i>Activity 2: Inductive teaching of commas</i>	114
Mini-Lessons: Developing Proofreading Skills	116
<i>Activity 1: Deductive teaching of proofreading skills for spelling</i>	116
<i>Activity 2: Deductive teaching: Using editing symbols</i>	117
References	119
Chapter 8: Providing Feedback in Conferences and Assessing Students' Writing	121
Comments and Grades	121
Time Issues	122
Time for Conferencing	122
Working within Reporting Periods	123
Student-Teacher Conferences	123
Processes of Student-Teacher Conferences	124
Content of Student-Teacher Conferences	126
<i>About students' writing processes</i>	126
<i>About students' writing</i>	127

Sample Pages

Assessing Students' Content-Area Writing Using Checklists	127
Role of Self-Assessment	133
Issues Regarding Teachers' Written Feedback	133
Recommendations for Written Comments	133
Writing Assessment Is Subjective	134
Issues Regarding Students' Feedback	135
What Peers Can Offer	135
Establishing Routines for Peer Feedback: Some Recommendations	136
References	138
 Chapter 9: Supporting Struggling Writers	 139
Finding Ideas and Building a Knowledge Base for Writers	139
Difficulties with Conventions of Writing	141
Physical and Mental Efforts Required	141
Learning English as a Second Language	142
Motivation to Write	144
A Desire to Write Is Often Socially Motivated	144
References	147
 Appendix A: Sample Unit Plans and Assessment of Student Writing in Content Areas	 149
Integrating Narrative Writing in Social Studies: Sample Unit Plan and Assessment of Student Writing	149
Integrating Poetry Writing in Health: Sample Unit Plan and Assessment of Student Writing	155
Integrating Writing of any Genre of Students' Choice in Science: Sample Unit Plan and Assessment of Student Writing	160
 Appendix B: Books that Incorporate Content Information: Grades 4-8	 167

WRITING AND LEARNING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

I write because I don't know what
I think until I read what I say.
(Flannery O'Conner in Murray 1990, p.8)

THE VALUE OF WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Many of you teach it all. You paddle alongside your students down a river of reading/writing/viewing/listening/speaking, across the lake of “Greece, an Ancient Civilization,” through the stream of “Force and Motion” and countless other topics within the grade-level curriculum. Across all the subject areas, you may find that there is so much for students to learn and so little time in the school day to do the learning. The problem is not having lots to learn – it can be rather exciting, really. Finding a way to accomplish everything within the confines of a classroom schedule is a constant challenge, however.

Some of you specialize in and teach one subject area to a large number of students. You already see the value of writing in your subject – for example, it helps students learn concepts and skills in context, and it helps students develop organizational skills. Yet, with the limited time you have to teach the concepts, writing can seem like an add-on – one more thing to add to the long list of things you need to achieve in the day. Finding time for students to write is a challenge. Finding time to assess and grade all the writing is another challenge altogether. You envision the stacks of papers from the hundreds of students you teach each week, and the idea of having students write more can be daunting.

This book is intended for those teachers who teach in the language arts or in English, and also for those teachers who are content-area specialists in history, geography, math, science, health, French, and so on. You will find ideas for teaching and assessing writing in content areas; ideas that take into account the challenges of your teaching context and the limits to your time.