

# Thinking Critically While Building Skills

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# Teaching Writing

## Activity 1

- What writing activities do you do with your students?
- When you teach writing, what are your biggest challenges?
- What is successful?

# Teaching Writing

“The five paragraph essay is the formalistic approach to writing that predominates today, and encourages students to box their ideas in ready-made forms, to write by formula” (Scanlon qtd. in Major).

[http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/GRAMMAR/composition/major\\_freewriting.htm](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/GRAMMAR/composition/major_freewriting.htm)

# Teaching Writing

## Major Points to be Covered

- Different approaches to teach writing: Bottom-up or Top-down?
- Benefits of incorporating Free-Writing into writing process
- Connecting students emotionally to a topic
- Pre-reading/listening to make connections
- Reading/Listening for opinions
- Free-Writing to promote critical thinking
- Let the writing process begin!

# Teaching Writing

## Skill-Building Exercises

- Beginning to mid-intermediate
- Focus on structure and accuracy
- Models of typical prose
- Modify paragraphs
- Bottom-up Approach

Murphy, Richard A (1997) *From Practice to Performance Volume 2*. Office of English Language Programs, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Washington DC.

# Teaching Writing

## Activity 2

*Decide the correct sequence for the following sentence segments*

1. she intends / a teacher / Mary is planning to go / to become / to the university / because
2. the village / the mountain / after / were / difficult climb / Anna, Bob, and Ralph / their / when / very tired / up / they reached

# Teaching Writing

she intends / a teacher / Mary is planning to go  
/ to become / to the university / because  
Mary is planning to go to the university because  
she intends to become a teacher.

# Teaching Writing

she intends / a teacher / Mary is planning to go  
/ to become / to the university / because  
Mary is planning to go to the university because  
she intends to become a teacher.

the village / the mountain / after / were / difficult  
climb / Anna, Bob, and Ralph / their / when /  
very tired / up / they reached

Anna, Bob and Ralph were very tired when they  
reached the village after their difficult climb up  
the mountain.

# Teaching Writing

## Process Approach

- Top down: begins with theme and works down to grammar for intermediate/advanced learners
- **Independent Free-write on the topic**
- Group work - Revising
- Drafting
- Group work - Editing
- Re-writing

# A Little Bit of Theory

## Two Stages of Thinking

- First order: “intuitive and creative and does not strive for conscious direction or control.”
- Second order: “committed to accuracy and strives for logic and control.”

# Free-Writing to Promote Critical Thinking

First order thinking = Freewriting

Writing an uncensored stream of consciousness without censorship. Taps into emotions and allows thoughts of how and why to flow unfiltered.

Freewriting fosters critical thinking skills, skills that refer "to the ability to think critically about one's own thinking, feelings and beliefs, and a willingness to evaluate ideas and arguments" (Richard Paul qtd. in Major, 2)

# Teaching Writing

## Activity 3

- What are some writing topics you have given students?
- What topics are the most motivating?
- Why?

# Using Authentic Language to Connect to Experience

Voice of America News.com Special English  
<http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/>

“The goal of Special English is to communicate by radio in clear and simple English with people whose native language is not English.”

- 1500 word core vocabulary
- Short simple sentences in active voice
- Broadcasts read at slower pace
- Real-life topics to which students can relate

# Using Authentic Language to Connect to Experience

## Pre-reading/listening activities

- Vocabulary
- Predictions
- Think-Pair-Share
- Other activities?

# Using Authentic Language to Connect to Experience

## Activity 4

Think-Pair-Share topic question:

*How has chatting and online social networking affected your writing?*

1. Think (1 minute)
2. Share with partner (1 minute)
3. Listen to partner (1 minute)

# Using Authentic Language to Connect to Experience

## Activity 5

“Students’ Writing and the Web: Motivator or OMG?”

<http://www.voanews.com/specialenglish/2010-01-28-voa1.cfm>

- Listen to the passage and follow the text.
- Underline or highlight the argument you agree with the most.

# Turning the Connection into Student Language

## Freewriting - THE RULES

- 5+ minutes of no fear writingwritingwritingwriting
- No worrying about grammar or spelling - JUST WRITE
- No right or wrong - JUST WRITE
- No erasing - JUST WRITE
- No thinking - JUST WRITE
- No stopping - JUST WRITE

# Free-Writing Planting a Seed

## Activity 6

- Write the quotation from the text that you agree with the most.
- Write for 5 minutes and explain WHY you agree and use personal experience to support your opinion.

**NOW WRITE**

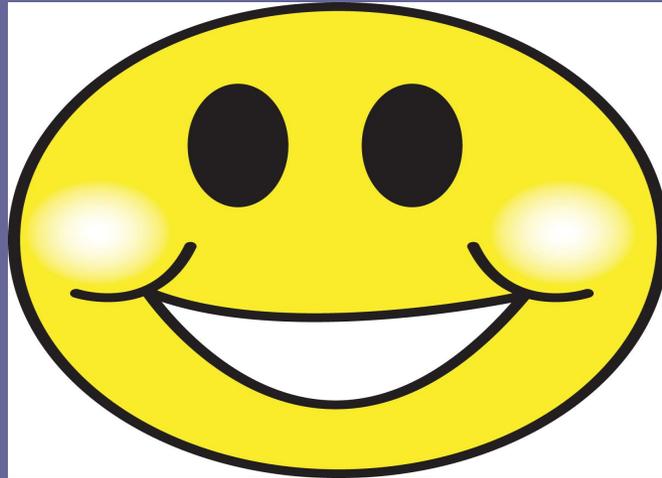
# Free-Writing

## Nurturing the Seed

### Now work with the raw product

- Students read out loud to group
- Revise essay structure and content
- Teacher uses student generated language to teach form - Create skill-building and grammar exercises from students' product
- Peer-editing
- Re-writing
- Final product

# THANK YOU



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Here to support English teachers

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