

Learning to Write – Writing to Learn



- ✓ Twelve Big Ideas
- ✓ Five Actions to Balance
- ✓ Eleven Questions to Grapple With

LITERACY DEFINED

Students become literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently for learning and communicating in and out of school and for participating effectively in society.

Literacy involves students listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts.

LITERACY DEFINED

Literacy encompasses the knowledge and skills students need to access, understand, analyse and evaluate information, make meaning, express thoughts and emotions, present ideas and opinions, interact with others and participate in activities at school and in their lives beyond school.

Success in any learning area depends on being able to use the significant, identifiable and distinctive literacy that is important for learning and representative of the content of that learning area.

The Three Questions

(Making Thinking Visible)

1. What actions/ types of thinking are most authentic to the discipline of writing? What do real writers actually do as they go about their work?
2. What are the actions/ types of thinking you remember doing yourself from a time when you were actively engaged in developing some new understanding of something within the discipline of writing?
3. What actions do students in your class spend most of their time doing when they're writing? What actions/ types of thinking do your students do on a regular basis?

This is what our Instructional Rounds Network Thought

Twelve Big Ideas About Writing

1. Real writing is not just a language exercise. It's a thoughtful expression and exploration! It's a process of deep thinking.
2. Authentic audience and purpose leads to engagement.
3. Teachers need knowledge of the big picture about teaching writing and this should be reflected in the Learning Intentions.
4. Tasks should reflect the specific learning that students should achieve.
5. Teacher modelling should make the process of writing visible.
6. Teachers and students need to understand the language of literacy.

Developed at a workshop of the
Creating a Path Instructional Rounds
network

Twelve Big Ideas (continued)

7. Students should make conscious language choices.
8. We need high expectations for our students. Learning should enable success.
9. Writing needs to be meaningful so that students are invested in it. Give students space to bring their own lives and experiences into writing.
10. We need to be aware of the links between oral language and writing
11. We need to clarify the misconceptions about pedagogy.
12. Students need opportunities to write to learn across the KLAs and develop the multiple literacies for future learning.

Five Aspects to Balance

1. The mechanics of writing: process vs expressive creativity
2. Scaffolding vs ownership (Are we over-scaffolding which leads to a loss of ownership?)
3. Strategic activity vs problem solving
4. Revising vs editing (deep revising to ensure quality)
5. Deep vs wide (Are we trying to cover too much in a limited time?)

Five Acts to Balance

1. The mechanics of writing– process vs expressive creativity
2. Scaffolding vs ownership (Are we over-scaffolding which leads to a loss of ownership?)
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Eleven Questions to Grapple With

1. How can we get our students to think deeply about what they are writing?
2. Can students write deeply across the curriculum if they can't formulate compound, grammatically correct sentences that effectively convey their thinking?
3. How do we balance purpose with student choice?
4. Are we providing students enough opportunities to write for an authentic purpose?
5. What should the revision process look like?
6. How do we challenge students and ensure high expectations?

Eleven Questions to Grapple With (continued)

7. What knowledge do teachers need?
8. How do we ensure consistency of teacher judgement?
9. How do the Literacy Continuum markers guide/support this approach to writing?
10. How do we ensure writing is meaningful to the writer and does not become decontextualized?
11. Are we providing opportunities for students to write to learn across all the KLAs?

Making Change: What Makes a Difference?

(High Growth Schools)

- Intervene early & maintain the focus
- Know what students can do & teach accordingly
 - Formative assessment
- Have clear and transparent learning goals
 - Learning continua or progressions
 - Explicit teaching
- Focus on teacher professional learning

Teaching writing well has far-reaching benefits



I think we should put thinking at the core of the writing we teach—in every subject, in every grade.

— Fu Danling, *Conversation Currents*

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