

Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement

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Time Frame 60-90 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- How can writing strategies increase student engagement across the curriculum?

Summary

In this professional learning session, participants will engage in collaborative writing activities, discover how writing can increase student engagement, and leave with strategies and resources that can be implemented immediately in their classrooms.

Learning Goals

- Participants engage in collaborative writing activities.
- Participants discover how writing can promote student engagement.
- Participants discuss how writing strategies and activities can be used across the curriculum.

Attachments

- Note Catcher—Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement.docx
- Note Catcher—Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement.pdf
- Presenter Slides—Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement.pptx
- Research Cards—Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement.docx
- Research Cards—Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement.pdf
- Two-Voice Poem Image Cards—Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement.docx
- Two-Voice Poem Image Cards—Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement.pdf
- Two-Voice Poem—Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement.docx
- Two-Voice Poem—Writing Strategies to Increase Student Engagement.pdf

Materials

- Presenter Slides (attached)
- Note Catcher (attached; one per participant)
- Research Cards (attached; a variety for each group)
- Two-Voice Poem (attached; one per participant)
- Two-Voice Poem Image Cards (attached; a variety for participants to choose from)
- Envelopes
- Variety of colored paper
- Pens
- Highlighters (optional)

15 minutes

Engage

Tech Integration: Padlet

The Six-Word Memoir activity is facilitated using Padlet. Before starting the session, set up a Padlet using the Wall layout with the question: "What does writing look like in your classroom?"

Pass out the attached **Note Catcher** handout and writing utensils. Explain to participants that this handout enables them to take notes over the strategies and resources referred to throughout the session. Briefly introduce yourself and welcome participants to the session using the attached **Presentation Slides**.

Go to **slide 3,** Six-Word Memoir. Briefly review the strategy. Go to **slide 4** and present the question: "What does writing look like in your classroom?" Allow participants time to create a Six-Word Memoir to answer the question. Ask participants to write their memoirs on the slips of paper at their table. Display **slide 5** with the Padlet information and ask participants to enter their Six-Word Memoir into the Padlet. Discuss responses as a whole group.

Go to **slide 6-7** and review the session's essential question and objectives. Explain to participants that this provides a roadmap of where we will go as a group in this session and what outcomes we should expect from the session.

20 minutes

Explore

Teacher's Note: Preparation

Prior to beginning the session, group the Research Findings so that each group will have different cards. If the group is large, it is acceptable to repeat cards.

Create a Google Doc with the directions for a Sentence, Phrase, Word activity. Set the Google Doc to be shared and edited by anybody with the link.

Ask participants to form groups of 4-6. Go to **slide 8**, and briefly review the Sentence, Phrase, Word strategy.

Go to **slide 9** and pass out envelopes with **Research Cards** to each table group. Ask groups to review the information on the cards. Allow time for participants to discuss what stands out to them, what is the most interesting or meaningful to them, and what they consider to be the most important. After groups have had a chance to discuss their thoughts, direct them to a shared Google Doc. Ask participants to enter a sentence, a phrase, and a word that they see as the most meaningful/interesting/important from the research findings. Ask for volunteers to share what they found meaningful or interesting about the research.

Teacher's Note: Word Cloud

After participants have entered their sentence, phrase, and word on the shared Google Doc, use those to create a word cloud for the Word Splash activity in the Explain section of the learning experience. Use whichever word cloud generator you are familiar with, but ABCya has a simple word cloud generator available. https://www.abcya.com/games/word_clouds

20 minutes

Explain

Ask participants to get into pairs for this next activity. Display **slide 10** and briefly review the Two-Voice Poem strategy. Go to **slide 11** and pass out a variety of the attached **Two-Voice Poem Image Cards** and allow pairs to choose one of the cards that interest them. Pass out the attached **Two-Voice Poem handout**. Briefly review the instructions to complete the graphic organizer. Provide time for pairs to work together in writing their Two-Voice Poem using the card they chose. When finished, ask volunteers to share what they have written.

After participants have had time to share their writing, ask them to consider the Research Findings from earlier and the Two-Voice Poem they just created. Display **slide 12**. Review the Word Splash strategy. Display the Word Cloud that was created from their Sentence, Phrase, Word responses. Display **slide 13**. Ask participants to select 5 or 6 words from the Word Cloud and use the Word Splash strategy to answer this question: *How does this writing strategy align with the research on using writing to increase student engagement in the classroom?* Ask for volunteers to share their responses.

20 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 14**. Explain to participants that these Two-Voice Poems were created by 5th and 6th graders. Present the **Poems for Two Voices** video. Briefly discuss the Word Art poetry on **slide 15**. Allow time for participants to explore the provided resources. If time is short, review these resources as a whole group.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Provide time for participants to explore the resources for integrating writing into their curriculum on **slide 16**. Then, display **slide 17**. Briefly review the Commit and Toss strategy. Go to **slide 18** and pass out slips (1/4 page) of various colored papers. Ask participants to commit to one way they could integrate writing strategies into their curriculum to promote student engagement. Participants should write their response on a slip of paper, crumple it up, then toss it! Ask participants to pick up a colored paper different than what they had to begin with. Ask for volunteers to share out the response on the paper. Discuss as a whole group the ways that writing strategies can be used to promote student engagement.

Go to **slide 19** and provide your participants with time to take notes on the strategies that were used throughout the session.

Slide 20 is a quote from Pam Allyn. Briefly point out how just like breathing in is as important as breathing out, writing is just as important as reading. **Slide 21** provides additional research articles on writing across the curriculum if participants would like further reading.

Research Rationale

When students write, they learn more and remember more. Increasing the quantity and quality of writing students are expected to produce can not only increase student engagement and deepen learning, but also support college and career readiness (Gallagher, 2017). The burden of writing instruction and practice should not fall solely on the English department. "Students can benefit from learning to articulate through authentic and relevant writing. Writing can be beneficial in all core subjects, not just English Language Arts, as well as special programs such as Fine Arts and Physical Education (Childs, 2020)."

Creating a community of writers across the curriculum does take effort, creativity, and innovation. "Authentic and meaningful writing tasks are those that show students the intentions behind the assigned tasks and are those assignments that expose various aspects of voice (point of view and emotions) and exploration of written genres (Childs, 2020)." By providing teachers with strategies to engage students in authentic writing tasks, their students will begin to create, question, explain, and challenge their environments. When students are provided with these tools and strategies and they can see the purpose in writing, they will be able to make connections to their own experiences and their writing. Providing students time to utilize their writing skills across the curriculum allows students to become comfortable with authentic writing practices and gives students a voice.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Commit and Toss. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/119
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Sentence, phrase, word. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/54
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Six-Word Memoir. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/75
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Two-Voice Poem. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/133
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Word Splash. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/199