



The Writing Way: Mindful Writing for ELLs

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MATSOL May 2016

Do Now

How do you currently use journal writing with your students?



What questions do you have about teaching writing to ELLs?

Ask 3 Then Me

- Ask at least three other participants what questions they have about teaching writing to ELLs
- Choose one question that at least three people share
- Share your question with the whole group

Who we are

Robin

Middle school teacher
Duxbury Public Schools



Margie

ELL instructional coach
Cambridge Public Schools



Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Define mindful writing for ELLs
2. Identify essentials for implementation
3. Explain 5 key components/benefits of mindful writing for ELLs
4. Develop mindful writing prompts

Mindful writing for ELLs is...

expressive and reflective writing in a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment

that will increase student engagement, develop resilience, improve academic performance...

and ultimately nurture students' writing proficiency.





 **Mindful writing in action**

Set up mindful writing in class

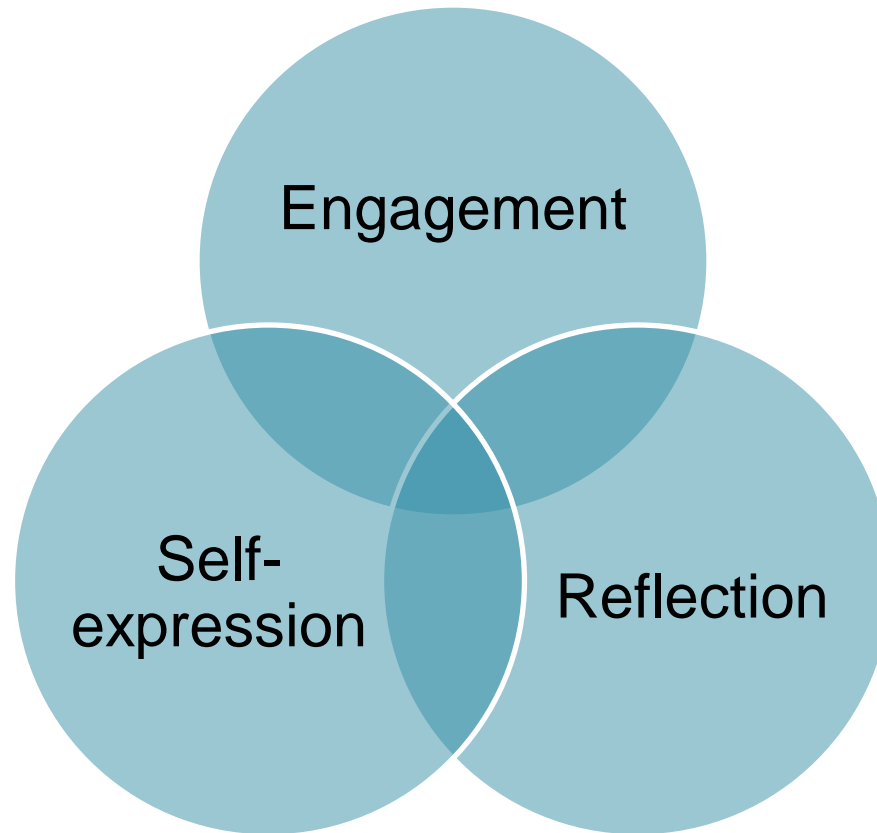
TEACHER

- Establish a consistent time for writing
- Keep writing to 10 minutes
- Create prompts on topics important to the student
- Set expectations, e.g. at least 1 page

STUDENTS

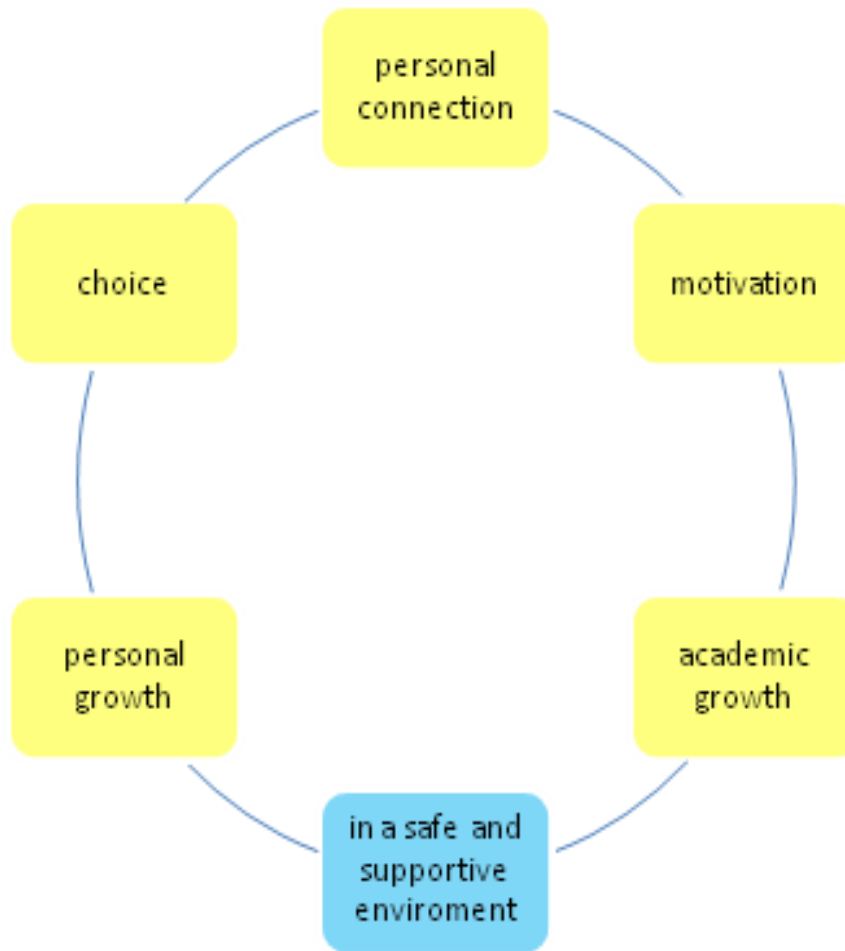
- Keep a writing notebook in class
- Can expect privacy
- Title and date each entry
- Re-read and reflect
- Are accountable: all must write

Mindful writing





Engagement





“*Caring* about students beyond the boundaries of the classroom is the first step of sparking engagement.”


Beth Morrow

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WEEK






Self-expression



“The literary merit or otherwise of the writing produced is less important than the content of writing and its significance to the writer.” (1)



 **Reflection**



“Expressive writing is a self-reflective tool with tremendous power. By exploring emotional upheavals in our lives, we are forced to look inward and examine who we are. This occasional self-examination can serve as a life-course correction.” (2)

Reflection is “the final step in a comprehensive approach to actively processing information.” (3)

In reflective classrooms “students know they will not ‘fail’ or make a mistake...they can produce personal insight and learn from all their experiences.” (4)

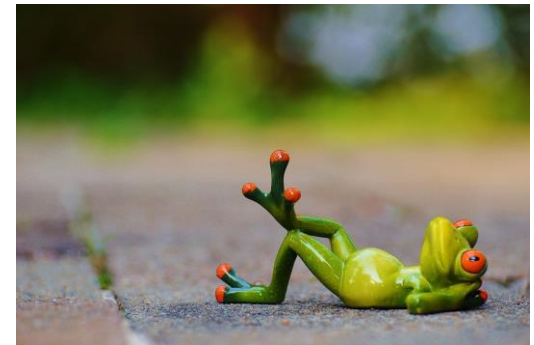


 **Stress reduction**

In studies, participants who wrote about core values prior to a stressful event showed no increase in stress...


“Reminding themselves of their most valued strengths protected them from anxiety.” (5)

Briefly writing about personal values can buffer negative effects of chronic stress on performance and improve problem solving (6)





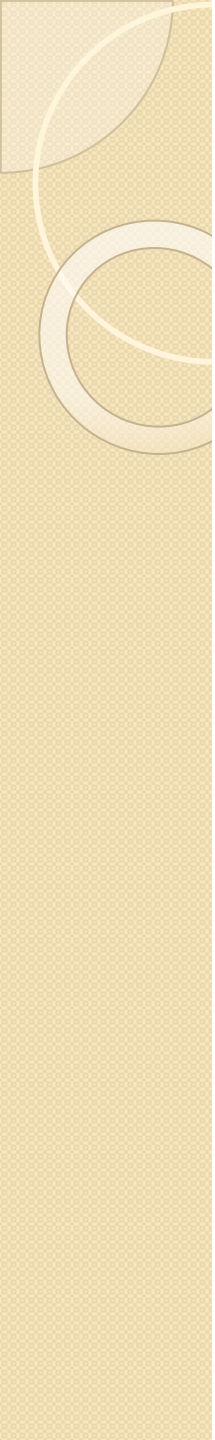
 **Growth and healing**



“If you hear and tell stories that help you see yourself in positive ways, you will...being to tell your own stories of optimism.” (7)

“Personal journal, diary, or first draft writing can have an intensely cathartic or gently illuminative effect upon the writer.” (8)

Three minutes of writing about an important personal value increases feelings of self-compassion, which promotes pro-social behaviors (9)





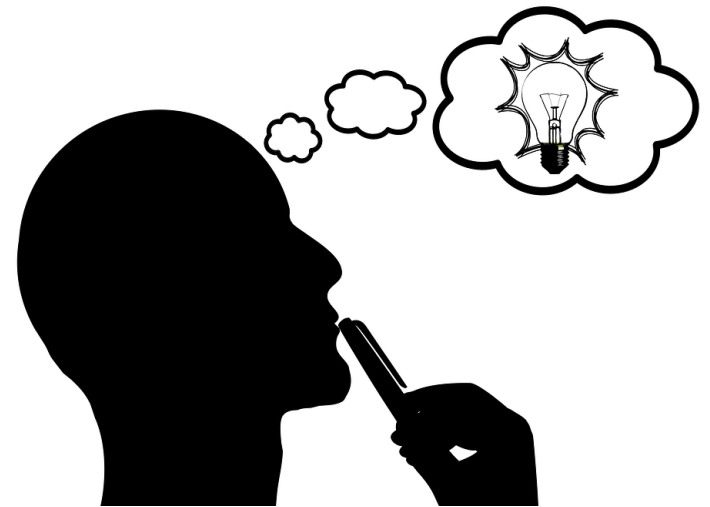
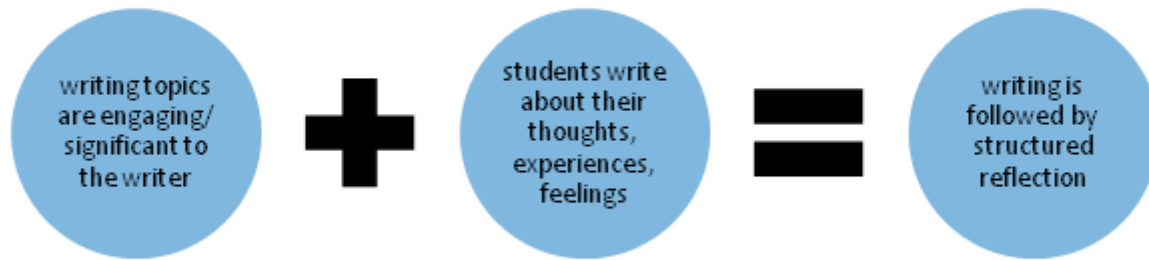
Sample prompts

Sensory

Academic

Personal

Creating prompts



Create a prompt

- How will you engage students?
- What personal feelings, thoughts, experiences will students write about?
- How will students reflect on what they wrote?

Support for ELLs

- Realia
- Images
- Music
- Word lists
- Model texts
- Sensory prompts
 - “Box of smells”
- Sentence stems
 - “Fill-in-the-blank poem”

Final Reflection

- **How can we use mindful/expressive writing to address the needs of ELLs?**

Handouts

- Do Now/Exit Ticket
- Thinking notes
- Sample prompts
- Creating a prompt