Writing Across the Curriculum For Secondary English Learners

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Writing Guidelines for Teachers of English Learners

1. Keep in mind that writing is developmental and reflects learners' English proficiency levels as well as their academic backgrounds in L1.

2. The beginning and intermediate level ELLs will make many errors as they begin to learn to write. Do not try to address all errors, but focus on correcting errors that will improve comprehensibility. With more advanced learners, move toward finer aspects of form. With each assignment, aim to have learners improve on a few aspects of their writing and make forward progress.

3. Different cultures use different discourse patterns in written communication. For example, in some cultures, the successful writer may not explicitly state the main idea but might rather provide evidence that would lead members of that culture to an understanding of this main point by the end of the writing. Or, the writer might tend to use more formal language and write with more elaboration and detail than American writers. In some cultures, it is dangerous to write arguments or disagree with authorities, so, students are expected to compile their papers from certain "approved" materials. These students may have a difficult time writing their own arguments and paraphrasing other's work.

4. Provide levels of support for ELLs as they developing their composition skills, e.g.,
   a. *Modeling & providing student models*: have students observe, question, and comment as they watch you compose a short text. Use the text to demonstrate a focus writing element. Use "think aloud" to describe the steps in the writing process as you follow them. Provide models of student writing that meet the standards you set.
   b. *Shared writing:* Work with the class to draft, revise, and polish a piece of writing. In shared writing, the teacher acts as scribe to write down students' language. The group can use planning tools such as outlines and graphic organizers, or structures such as writing frames.
   c. *Guided writing:* Guide students' development of a piece of writing by structuring each step in the process.
   d. *Independent writing*: learners use the writing process to develop their own work.

5. Keep in mind that grammar errors are also developmental for ELLs. Students at different levels will make different kinds of errors. Intermediate + students are ready to begin to address errors in form. Note errors in student writing and develop mini-lessons to address those errors. Leki (1992) has identified typical ESL errors that English Language Learners make when writing. Below are a few examples from her book, *Understanding ESL Writers: A Guide for Teachers*
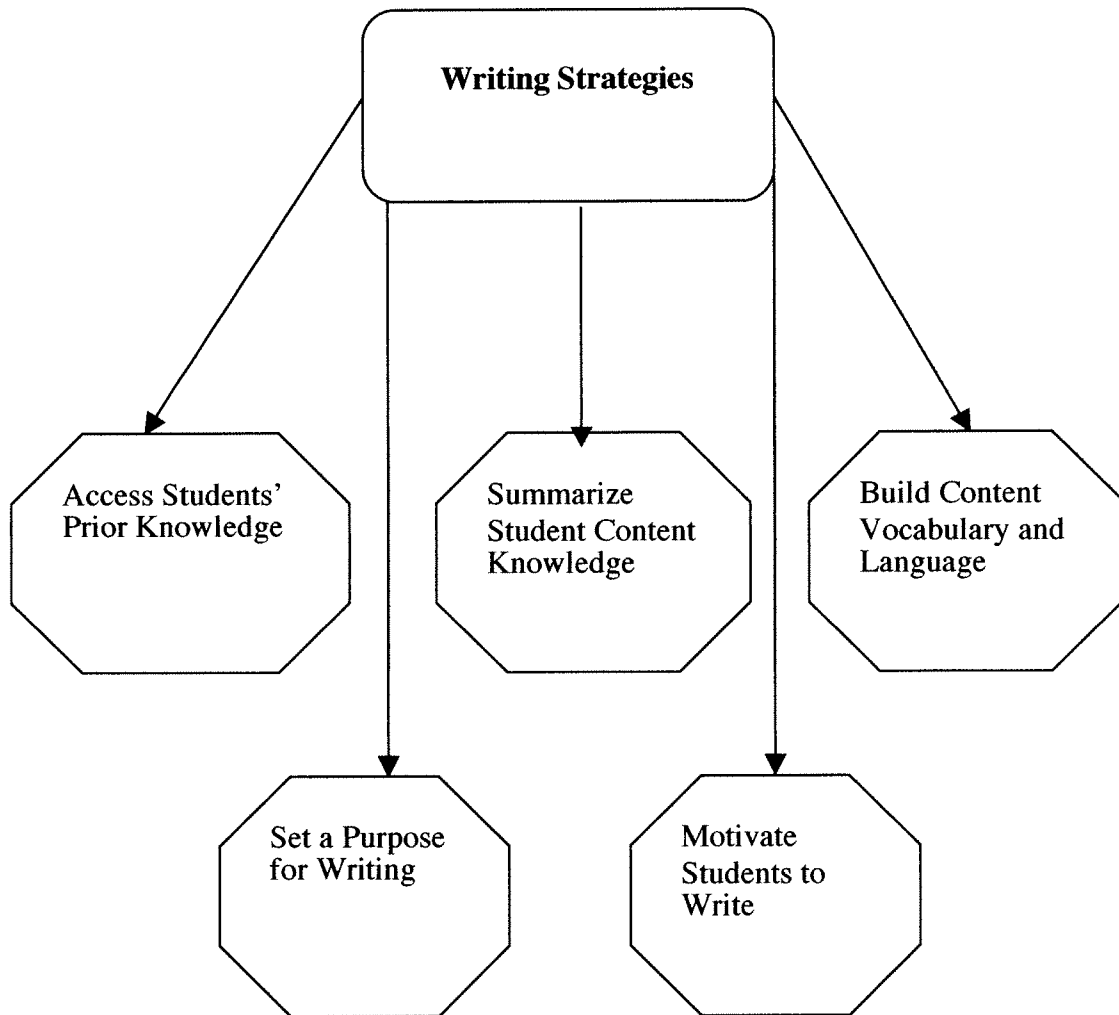
Sample Writing Errors for English Learners

(Based on areas identified in Leki – *Understanding ESL Writers: A Guide for Teachers*)

Error Type		Example
Articles and nouns	Definite vs indefinite articles	When you wash the hands, use a soap.
	Adjectives acting as nouns	The littles go to kindergarten
	Chosing between a and an	An human is a animal.
	Countable/non-countable nouns	My friend gave me many moneys
Pronouns	Faulty pronoun case and reference	My teacher gave me homework and I will do them.
Verbs/sentences	phrase fragments	The time I came to the US.
	clause fragments	Besides the homework reading I have to finish
	run-on sentences	I like to play soccer my brother does too.
	wrong verb forms	I have studying English since six grade and I did not speak good yet.
	Lack of subject-verb agreement	My sisters bothers me when I try to study.
	fuzzy syntax	To achieve to the college I have came to class and studied it.
	tense shifts	I collected the data and analyze it.
	Progressive verb forms	I am reading the newspaper every day. Now we reading Neruda in English class.
	Modals	She do it. He can does it.
	Passive/Active voice	Such events had never been happened before.
Adjective/adverb	Adjective/adverb confusion	I want to learn write English good.
	Adjective clauses	Frying in oil, chips have a lot of calories
	Adverb clauses	Some families are too poor that they can hardly have enough to eat.
Prepositions	Omission, wrong preposition	He's going football game. We come at Atlanta.

Writing Strategies

1. Text Recall and Summary
2. Written Roundtable
3. Learning Logs
4. Think - Quickwrite - Pair – Share
5. Hot Seat (Point of View)
6. Sociogram

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                    │    Writing Strategies    │
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   Access Students'      Summarize            Build Content
   Prior Knowledge       Student Content      Vocabulary and
                         Knowledge            Language

        Set a Purpose              Motivate
        for Writing                Students to
                                   Write
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WRITING STRATEGIES

1. TEXT RECALL AND WRITTEN SUMMARY
Purpose: The purpose of this strategy is to engage English Learners in retelling
        something they read and then writing a summary of the text.   The steps
        in the process help student learn to retell text in their own words and to
        summarize concisely.
Procedure:
1. Provide students with a page (or less) of photocopied text.
2. Read the selection aloud to the students. Students follow along
3. Tell students to underline on the photocopied text the key words and phrases you dictate
4. Ask students to copy (list) the key words and phrases on another piece of paper in the order found in the text.
5. Ask students to retell the text to a partner using only the key words and phrases.
6. Ask students to write a summary of the text from just the key words and phrases.

2. ROUNDTABLE
Purpose: The purpose of Roundtable is to have students generate as many facts and
        ideas about a topic as they can. It allows the teacher to know what
        vocabulary or concepts the students already know. Students need to listen to
        others in their group so that they do not repeat something already said.
Procedure:
    Written Roundtable
1. Give each table group one sheet of paper.
2. Write the topic on the board
3. The first student writes something she knows about the topic on the paper and passes it to the next student.
4. The next student writes something he knows on the paper and passes it to the next student etc.
5. After 5 minutes ask one student from each group to read what is on the group's list.
6. Representatives from other groups cannot repeat something that has already been said, but they can add new information.

Math: Explain the steps to complete the solution the system of inequalities $x + 2y < 6$ and $-x + y > 0$
Science: Parts of a cell and their functions eg. Cell membrane – a gate keeper that allows chemicals to enter a cell and waste to leave a cell.
Social Science: List the causes and events in World War II
English: List a literary element and its definition eg. **Tone:** the attitude a writer takes toward a subject, a character or an audience.
World Languages: List and irregular verb and write a sentence using that verb

3. LEARNING LOGS

Purpose: To provide English Learners with a learning tool to remember key points they are learning.

Procedure:
1. Ask students to take notes as they listen to a short lecture, guest speaker, or watch a video.
2. In pairs students compare their notes
3. Next students complete a learning log that is a two-column chart. Provide students with written information in the left hand column. Students write their understanding of the statement in the right hand column
4. Students share their learning logs with the class.

Double column Learning Log
1. Student draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper making two columns
2. Ask students to copy a passage from their reading or textbook, in the left hand column. This should be a short passage but one that needs explanation.
3. Ask students to reflect on the passage in the right hand column.

English
River Merchant's Wife: A Letter

Passage from the Reading or Text	Student reflection
"Her hair was cut straight across her forehead"	This means she is young since she has bangs
Two small children without dislike or fear	
Called to a thousand times I never looked back	

Science
Compare DNA and RNA

DNA	RNA
Long molecule	Shorter molecule
Many Genes	
2 strands	

Math
Using substitution to solve a system of linear equations

Method	Example
1. Solve the first equation for one of the variables	$m=4n$
2. Substitute expression into other equation for the variable	
3. Substitute this value into the first equation and solve	

History
Hierarchy

Item	Example
1. Definition	How a group of people are arranged in order
2. Sentence	
3. Reading selection	
4. Synonym	
5. Picture	

4. THINK- QUICKWRITE - PAIR - SHARE
Purpose: To students' build background knowledge and vocabulary and to think and write about the topic they will explore during their reading and writing.

Procedure:
1. *Think:* Ask students to think about a time "English: someone helped them" (Math: ways we use decimals in everyday life; Science: Steps in the lab report; Social studies: Types of child labor; World Language; Places to visit in France)
2. *Quickwrite:* Ask students to write about the topic for 5 minutes without stopping. If students don't know what to write, they should write their name over and over until they get a new idea. Assure students that spelling and grammar is not important. The main idea is to get as many ideas down on paper as possible.
3. *Pair:*   Ask students read what they wrote to a partner and listen to their partner's story.
4. *Share:* Pairs of students get together with another pair of students (groups of four).   Students take turns talking and telling each other about their story.

5. HOT SEAT (POINT OF VIEW)
Purpose: The group activity that allows students to become a character in the reading. The student becomes one of the characters in the reading and answers questions from others in the group as that character might answer them. The purpose is to enable the student to analyze different points of view.

Procedure:
1. Divide the class into small groups of 3-5 students. Each group writes 3 or 4 questions to ask a "character" in the lesson. Questions might focus on why a character did something or how he felt about something that happened in the reading.
2. Each group sends one person to the next table or the front of the room to be in the "hot seat". The "Hot seat" students answer questions posed by the other group(s).
3. Students write a summary of what the character said.

Sample questions
English – Rikki-Tikki-Tavi: Since we are not there in person to see you ourselves, please, Mr. Tavi tell us what you look like. .What was your reaction when you heard Nag and Nagaina plotting to kill the people you live with?
Science - Fungi: Tell us about yourself and your family. How would we know you if we saw you somewhere? We hear you are doing lots of good for man and the environment. Please tell us how.
Social Studies – Abraham Lincoln: Why did you want to become president? What were your true feelings about slavery? Did you think the civil war would be such a long war? Why or Why not?
**Math – Metric Measures:** What does the prefix *kilo* tell you about the word *kilometer*? Is a centimeter more of less than a decimeter?

6. CHARACTER SOCIOGRAM

Purpose: Students make a graphic reflecting the relationship of a main character with other characters in story. This strategy provides students dialogue practice and the use of colloquial language.

Procedure:
   1. Brainstorm possible "characters" from your reading or lesson.
   2. Write the names of characters in separate boxes on a large piece of paper.
   3. Write a question one character asks the other along the top of the connecting line (e.g. Lion to the Mouse: Why did you let me go?)
   4. Write the answer to the question under the line (e.g. Mouse to Lion: Because you needed help)
   5. Add other characters and connecting lines. Characters should "talk" to all other characters.
   6. Students can then write a skit based on the questions and answers they wrote
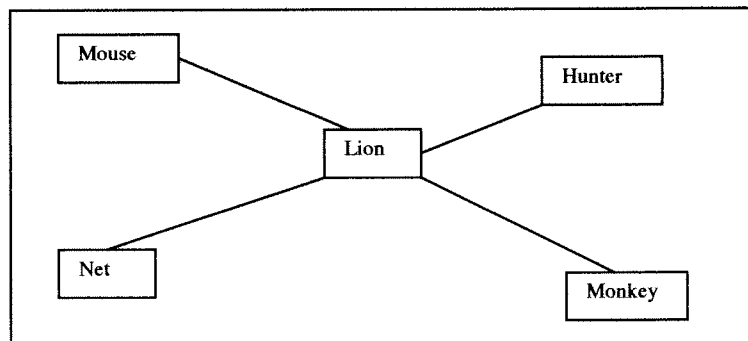
MINI LESSON CHECKLIST

Content	T	RT	RT	RT	RW	RW	RW	M	Comments / examples
Introduction	1/06	√	√	√	√			3/06	Consistently has an intro
Conclusion	2/10	√	√	√	√			4/20	
Paragraphing	1/06	√	√	√	√	√	√	5/10	
Main Idea									
Supporting detail									
Descriptive Words									
• Use of adverbs									
• Use of adjectives									
• Use of action verbs									
• adjective/adverb confusion									
• Use of similes /metaphor									
Mechanics									
• Commas									
• Capitals									
• Periods									
• Stay in one tense (past or present)									
• wrong verb forms									
• tense shifts									
• faulty pronoun case and reference									
• double negatives									
• lack of subject-verb agreement									
• fuzzzy syntax									
• phrase fragments									
• clause fragments									
• run-on sentences									

T = Date Taught   RW= Re-write   RT = Re-taught   M= Mastered

STRUCTURES OF WRITTEN GENRES

Narrative Fiction - Story			
Examples	Purpose	Structure	Cohesion/language
Story • Myth • Folk tale • Short Story • Poetry • Drama play or skit	To entertain	Strong Story Organization • situation • characters • events • complication • resolution	• detailed plot, setting, characters, events • descriptive language • dialogue • Past, present, or future tense • strong voice

Expository – Retell/Summary			
Examples	**Purpose**	**Structure**	**Cohesion/language**
Biography • Memoir • Journal • Diaries • Personal letters • Obituaries	About people and events	• Introduction • Orientation • Event(s) • Conclusion	• use of connectors of time e.g. then, later, later meanwhile, a few months • usually past tense verbs of action and feelings, • written in first person (writer is 'I')
Examples	**Purpose**	**Structure**	**Cohesion/language**
Report • Descriptions • explanations • lab reports • guidebooks • project reports	To provide information on a topic	• State the topic • Give examples • Provide supporting details • Summarize	• usually written in present tense • strong use of similes • use of chronological order e.g. first, second, next
Examples	**Purpose**	**Structure**	**Cohesion/language**
Procedural • How to do something	To describe the steps to do something	• State the goal or aim • State the tools needed • Describe the specific steps to reach the goal • Evaluate to determine if goal was met	• use of connectors of sequence e.g. first, second, finally • use of bullets, numbers, or time related words (first, last, then, before, next) • use of commands e.g. Draw a line.
Examples	**Purpose**	**Structure**	**Cohesion/language**
Argument • Persuasive Essay • Position Paper • Book Reviews • Speeches	To argue or persuade	• State the Thesis • Provide the Arguments for or against • Discuss counter argument • Draw conclusions that	• use of strong auxiliary verbs to add voice (will, should, have, do, must, can) • use of present tense • use of connectors of

• Debates • Editorials		summarize important points	sequence e.g. first, second, finally • use of transition words e.g. therefore, however, if

STANDARDS-BASED RUBRIC

Standard: *The student will revise writing for appropriate word choice and organization, consistent point of view, and transitions, with standard grammatical forms and spelling.*

Elements of Writing	Below Standard	Approaches Standard	Meets Standard	Exceeds Standard
Content	Conveys ideas in drawings with labels	Writes with some supporting details	Develops a central idea in depth	Includes anecdotes and diversions for specific purposes
Word choice	Chooses words from oral vocabulary only	Begins to choose some words purposefully from other sources	Makes intentional word choices base on purpose and audience	Manipulate language for stylistic effect
Organization	Uses separate page areas for print and illustrations	Begins to organize ideas into logical sentences and paragraphs	Consistently uses paragraphs to group related ideas	Manipulates paragraphs for effect
Point of View	No point of view noted	Uses first person point of view only	Uses multiple points of view	Manipulates different points of view for effect
Transitions	No transition words used	Uses common single word or short phrases to make transitions	Uses transitional words and sentences to connect groups of related ideas	Manipulates transitional elements for effect
Conventions	Multiple errors interfere with the reader's understanding	Spelling and grammar errors but they do not interfere with meaning	Minimal punctuation and other writing conventions errors	Controls conventions but may break those conventions for special effect

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