

Strategy: FREE WRITING

Overview:

Free writing is used to encourage students to write their own ideas. Students benefit from this free writing exercise by stretching their creative abilities, and by expressing themselves using written form.

Instructional Strategy:

Begin this strategy by brainstorming possible topics for writing. Once a list of topics has been developed, each student will decide on a topic to use in his/her writing. Students will be given several minutes to list ideas to be included in their writing. Students will then be given a set amount of time to complete the free writing assignment. Some points that can also be included on a generic free writing sheet or on the board: Stay on topic; relate this to your life in some way; be creative; dig deep into the subject with details; express your feelings. The writing assignment can be handed in for teacher evaluation, volunteers may read theirs to the class, or students can pair-share to provide suggestions for editing. By having students write on a regular basis, teachers can encourage and nurture their students' value of the writing process, and the end product also.

You are ready to TeachItNow! Here is how you can use the concept map strategy to teach story events. A learning target, instructional activity, and assessment technique are provided.

Learning Target:

Students will draw a picture. Using the picture, students will write about their picture.

Activity:

Teach Beginning Writing Process with the “FREE WRITING” Strategy

Preschool and kindergarten children are emergent readers and writers. The content should be stressed at the beginning stage, before correcting spelling and structural errors in order for children to feel “safe” about writing about a topic. Children should be immersed in interesting literature and print and be given numerous, daily chances to draw, color and write before attempting to teach the writing process with children. The following are some beginning steps to follow when encouraging children to write:

- Share books about a topic or unit with children
- Read aloud and read often to children
- Brainstorm story ideas before writing
- Select an idea to write about

- Draw a picture about your idea

Have students draw a picture based on a story or an idea, then encourage the children to write about their picture. Children will need lots of encouragement to write and will frequently say “I don’t or I can’t spell”. Emphasize to children that they need to practice writing, and to spell using the sounds found in letters and words (called “invented spelling” or “temporary spelling”). Tell them they are to put down all the sounds from a word that they hear. Also encourage the children to use a capital letter at the beginning of their sentence, put a “finger space” between words and a period at the end of the sentences. Assist children whenever they need it, but do not directly spell words for them, rather encourage them to sound out words. Most classrooms are equipped with word walls, word dictionaries, word banks or other tools to assist children in spelling. Again encourage students to use those resources.

Once the children feel they have finished their work, have them dictate the story to you. Do not correct or erase their words, but write under their sentence if it’s needed to clarify. If this is to be a published piece, at another time, have children revise and edit their sentences to complete the writing process. Children, Mentors, Teachers or Volunteers can help children copy their “story” onto a computer publishing tool for a final draft.

Formative Assessment:

Post the picture drawn by your students for the writing. Have students individually stand by their picture and read their writing to the class.