Speak Before You Write

Coaching English Learners to Write On-Demand for Standardized Tests

Roadmap of today’s workshop

 Artikel I. Planned Not Canned-- building fluency from the rubble of anxiety
– Pre-writing before the prompt
– Speaking Before You Write--oral exercises in internalizing structure

II. Building Confidence to Take a Stance in Persuasive Writing
– Participation Structures that emphasize academic language
– Student -generated writing prompts
Writing Process Revisited

“Formulaic writing should be neither vilified nor praised but instead valued as one component of a writer’s toolbox.”

~Richard Argys

“One More Thing: Can We Teach Process Writing and Formulaic Response?”

_English Journal, January 2008_

Planned Not Canned

The Brain Purge

pre-writing BEFORE the prompt

– Stolen from a speech kid
– Used as a pre-writing exercise when students face a surprise prompt
– Consider it a palette of potential examples
The Brain Purge…your turn

- Take Two --list what’s on your mind
- Comb your list for connections to the word “attitude” and place a star by the items
- Comb your list for connections to the word “aptitude” an place a dot by the items
- Outline a response to the prompt: Is attitude or aptitude more important to success?

Designing Roadmaps on Demand:

- Quickly Mapping Out Responses to Prompts using the Brain Purge and sentence starters:
  - “I have two examples why aptitude is more important than attitude. First…. 
  - “I have two examples why attitude is more important than aptitude….
- Then call on students to respond aloud
Speak Before You Write

“Thinking out loud leads to the internalization of procedures, processes, and patterns of thinking that result in better written projects.”
—Nancy Levy
“Teaching Analytical Writing”

Speed Prompting!

Almost as fun as speed dating, this exercise helps students think quickly and generate examples in a competitive setting.
Speed Prompting Demo--
watch out for that backpack!

Speed Prompting Debrief
Roadmapping

- In public speaking a “roadmap” gives both the audience and the speaker a map to follow.
  - I agree with this idea for three reasons…
  - I have two examples that prove why this is true…
- Roadmapping is a simplified form of outlining that can take the shape of a simple list

Talking to the Wall

- Students grab a roadmap generated at the end of the Brain Purge activity and talk themselves through an essay.
- Students should be reassured that with everyone talking at once, no one but the wall is listening.
- Approximately:
  - 2 minutes of speaking = 1 page of writing
Taking it To Their Seats

Partner up and talk through your outline
  – When you’re finished, ask your partner:
    • What was my most effective example?
    • Which example did you wish I’d expanded on further?
  – What adjustments would you make to your outline before writing your essay?
  – How many of you would steal an example you heard from your partner?

Building the Confidence to Take a Stand in Persuasive Writing

- Acknowledging that most standardized essay prompts want the writer to assert a position.
- Growing comfortable with disagreeing.
- Growing confident in having a position.
Participation Structures for expressing opinions

“Want to know the single best solution to get intermediate ELD students unstuck?
Ask them to speak in complete sentences.”

~Kevin Clark SCOE presentation 2009,

“Yes, BUT…” & “Yes, AND…”

- an efficient way to get *all* students discussing controversial topics
- Teacher can write a proposition on the board:
  (e.g. Lying is bad.)
- Begin with students just using “Yes, BUT”
  “Yes, but if you lie to protect someone’s feelings--like telling your grandma you liked her pie-- that’s not bad.”
  “Yes, but lying can mislead people, grandma might waste lots of time baking you more pies that you throw away!”
4-STEP REFUTATION:
the position-strengthening blend of concession and refutation

1. Mrs. Williamson said that lying is bad.
2. but I disagree
3. because lying can protect peoples’ feelings as in the example of telling your grandma that you like her cooking.
4. Therefore, lying can be help people from hurting one another.

The argument continues…

Gabi says that lying can prevent people from hurting each other
but I disagree
because there’s always a risk that the truth will be found out. When grandma discovers that you’ve been throwing away her pies, she’ll be more upset than if you had told her the truth.
Therefore, lying creates more opportunities for hurting others’ feelings.
4-Step Refutation

- Builds Higher Order Thinking Skills
- Employs academic language
- Instills a structured response that is both logical and assertive even in writing:
  e.g. Some may argue that lying is bad, but I disagree because lying can protect peoples’ feelings as in the example of telling my grandma that I like her cooking when I don’t. Therefore, lying can be good when it prevents hurting others.

Sitting on the Other Side of the Desk

- Why impromptu speakers and debaters write topics for each other at practice
- How a debater knows the difference between:
  - This house would reform public schools.
  - This house should reform public schools.
The Prompt Generator!

SAMPLE
Write your name on the BACK of a sheet of paper and on the front, generate three writing prompts using the following templates:
1. According to ________________, “__________________________” Plan and write an essay in which you confirm, challenge, or qualify the above assertion. Support your position with reasons and examples from your reading, studies, experiences, or observations.

2. Citing examples from your reading, observations and experiences, agree or disagree with the ideas expressed by ________________ in the following quotation: "----------------------------------"

3. Some experts in education argue that_______________________________. Others suggest_______________________________. What do you think should be read in the high school English classroom?

Sample college-placement prompt modeling
(www.santarosa.edu/app/placement):

- **ORIGINAL:** Most people have read a book or seen a play, movie, or television program that affected their feelings or behavior in some important way. Discuss such an experience of your own. Describe the book, play, movie, or television program and explain why you regard its effect on you as important.

- **MODEL:** Most people have visited a place that affected their feelings or behavior in some important way. Discuss such an experience of your own. Describe the place you visited and explain why you regard its effect on you as important.

- **MODEL:** Most people have experienced a conflict that affected their feelings or behavior in some important way. Discuss such an experience of your own. Describe the conflict and explain why you regard its effect on you as important.
Final Focus

Why I would continue to coach kids on how to write effectively on-demand even if the SAT essay retired and the exit exam exited for good...

Insult or Compliment?

Real word oral application of vocabulary to improve fluency.

After introducing new vocabulary, try using the words as insults or compliments. e.g. “The substitute teacher said that you were an astute class.”

Students can be asked to generate insults and compliments with the words as well.
Vocabulary Bonuses

I reward students with an extra participation point any time I hear them use one of our vocabulary words orally.

Students can earn a 10% bonus for using vocabulary words correctly in their written work. I insist they underline them so I can notice them!