

**The following activities were test driven in the writing support class this summer. The new intensive writing class will necessarily have more of an emphasis on the building blocks of sentences. However, some of these activities, along with the activities described in the writing manifesto, may be appropriate for this class as well.**

Most of the following ideas are from Writing Out Loud by Deborah Morgan and Writing Down the Bones by Natalie Goldberg

#### WORKING WITH PICTURES

- For error correction-use pictures and ask students to describe the picture for 5-10 minutes. Collect the papers. Prepare worksheets for the next class. Group the errors thematically, and hand each table the same sheet with 4 or 5 sentences on it. Students have to students identify describe, and fix each error. Have the original sentences on the board, and each group's fix written under it. Go over each sentence together. Then write the fix onto a large editing checklist hanging on the wall.
- Give each table a picture. (Pictures from National Geographic work really well for this.) Ask students to write for five minutes describing what they see. Then ask them to write for 5 minutes describing how this picture makes them feel. This has proven to be a good way to uncover possible rich writing topics for students.
- Post pictures. The teacher posts questions, and students come around and write answers. Or students can post both questions and answers. Questions can go from display to inference to opinion. Questions can be in various tenses.

#### WARM UP

- Put a word on the board and let students write about this word for 5-10 minutes. This works as a brainstorming, idea generating activity. It also helps students understand that writing is messy and the point is NOT to compose perfect sentences from head to pen on the first go. If the teacher does this too, it can be a good example of stream of consciousness connections to that word. After 5 minutes, the teacher can look over what she produced on the board, talk through the ideas, pick the one that is most promising and interesting and ERASE ALL THE REST. (I tried this with the "fireworks" after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and got a lot of interesting stories.)

- Put a key on each table and ask students to imagine that this key could open anything. What would it open? This activity lends itself to an oral preview—students take turns describing their ideas orally before they attempt to write down their ideas.

Work with the senses

Eyes: Go on a color walk. Pick a color. Go outside with a notebook and write down everything you see of that color.

Taste: Describe your favorite comfort food and the circumstances in which you eat it. Describe the best/worst thing you have eaten recently.

Smell: Fill in the blank. I like the smell of \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

(This could easily lend itself to a class poem.)

Touch: Describe a tree trunk, an ice cube, a fork, the grass. (This also works well as a whole class activity.)

Sound: Lists sounds that are familiar and comforting. List sounds that are annoying and jarring. (This too, lends itself to a class poem.) Go outside and sit for 5 minutes. Describe what you heard.

The focus on senses works as a nice segue way into the I Remember sense poems described in the writing manifesto.

Encourage students to write three or four basic sentences with the be verb. I am a teacher. I am from Michigan. I am 53 years old. Etc. Then encourage them to use the be verb to explore what else they are. This needs teacher modeling. I am the button on the sweater that does not match. I am a bright yellow sunflower, turning to face the sun. Etc.

Write a list of nouns on one side of a paper. Fold it over, and then think of an activity, like cooking, and write all the verbs that go with that activity. (This is a good whole class activity. Plus it reinforces what a noun is and what a verb is.) Unfold the paper and try and write sentences using the nouns with these verbs in interesting ways.

Working With Texts.

Have students underline parts of their own sentences that they are not sure of. This helps students focus on being aware of what they don't know.

In general, when putting out a general topic for students, like, Write about someone you miss...I think it helps to start by breaking down the question. What do you miss doing with this person? How did you meet this person? When did you last see this person? Etc.