

Beyond Exit Tickets: Using Writing to Assess

2 Minute Quick-write

How do you currently assess student learning?

How does assessment guide your instruction?

How do you use writing in your classroom?

How do you use writing to assess student learning?

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Digging Deep into Science Literacy

Summer 2017

Why incorporate writing into assessment?

Writing clarifies thinking.

Writing leads to higher order thinking.

Writing can provide high student engagement.

Writing creates permanent products.

Assessment	Evaluation
Formative or summative	Summative
Low stakes	High stakes
Guides instruction	Results in final score
Before, during, or after instruction	After instruction
Well-child check-up	Autopsy



“...the upper reaches of Bloom’s taxonomy could not be reached without some form of writing.”

(Kuhrt & Farris, 1990)

Writing About

- Brainstorm a list of key vocabulary terms.
- Younger students each pick one word to draw a picture and write a sentence about.
- Older students synthesize an assigned number of terms into a paragraph.

Genre-Hopping

- The writer takes one text and uses its information to compose a new text in another genre.
- Requires the writer to exercise creativity and rhetorical adaptability.

Writing to Demonstrate Learning	Writing to Learn
High stakes	Low stakes
Ex: essay	Ex: exit ticket
Goal is good writing	Goal is not good writing
The end product	Not usually the end product

Writing About and Genre-Hopping Benefits:

Applications:

Written Conversations

- Students write in response to a text back and forth to each other.
- Sharing and writing on a common experience deepens students' learning.

Procedures

1. Students are seated with a partner. The teacher prompts the students with an open-ended question. Examples might be, "What struck you about this text?" or "What are the most important ideas here?"
2. Both students in each pair begin writing their thoughts on paper. After 2-3 minutes, the students exchange papers. The students read what their partner wrote and respond in writing. For example, students might agree, disagree, ask a question, affirm their partner's thinking, or relate a personal anecdote. After another 2-3 minutes, students swap papers again.
3. After 2 or 3 exchanges are complete, students then talk out loud to their partner or participate in a whole-class discussion. Everyone should have fresh ideas about the topic after merging their thinking with a partner.

Misuses of Writing in Content Classrooms

Writing is only viewed as an end product with no thought to instruction that should follow.

Teacher's feedback is not aligned to the task.

Writing is used as a consequence for problematic behavior.

Factstorming

- Can be completed individually, in pairs, or in groups
- Students record a list of facts about the topic.
- Teacher offers a choice of high level writing activities.

Choice Examples

- Choose at least 3 facts that are related and describe the relationship clearly.
- Choose at least 3 facts and describe their causes or effects.
- Choose several facts and use them to write a brief summary.

Resources

51 Wacky We-Search Reports: Face the Facts with Fun by Barry Lane

The Best-Kept Teaching Secret: How Written Conversations Engage Kids... by Harvey Daniels and Elaine Daniels

But How Do You Teach Writing? A Simple Guide for All Teachers by Barry Lane

Checking for Understanding: Formative Assessment Techniques for Your Classroom (2nd Ed.) by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey

Science Formative Assessment by Page Keeley

Written Conversations and Factstorming

Benefits:

Applications: