

WRITING AS A COMMUNITY

1. **Tickets Out:** End each day/class period with a question that students must respond to on paper. The next day as a review of the previous day, read each Ticket Out anonymously. Can also do creative things with Ticket Outs— find a poem within the Ticket Outs; use www.wordle.net to represent student writing; modge podge all the words on a poster, etc.
2. **Responding to students through writing:** Take time to “talk” with students by responding to their journal writing once a month or so. You’ll be surprised at their enthusiasm in knowing that you read and reacted to their writing.
3. **Chalk Talk:** Start with an essential question written on big paper that is attached to the wall. Students respond to the question (and then to each other’s responses) through writing ALONE. No talking allowed. For the full protocol, please visit http://schoolreforminitiative.org/protocol/doc/chalk_talk.pdf.
4. **RAGS (Read Around Groups)**— Students responding to student writing: (Can be completed after Writer’s Marathon.) Students open journals to stories they have started. Randomly pass journals around. Students get 60-90 seconds to read all story starters and vote for one they would like to see completed. (For their own, they can vote for the one they wish to finish writing.) At the end, the one with the most votes is the one they will complete. *This allows students a different purpose for writing rather than solely for self.*
5. **The Four A’s**— Response to reading: Find quotes in the reading selection that the author Assumes, with which you Agree, want to Argue, and that you wish to Aspire to. Read in rounds each quote. For the full protocol, please visit http://schoolreforminitiative.org/protocol/doc/4_a_text.pdf.
6. **SASH**— Response to reading through emotion: Directly write four quotes from the reading selection, one each that made you surprised, angry, sad, happy. Read aloud each quote in rounds (It is fine if more than one person has the same quote).
7. **Writer’s Marathon:** Students write writing prompts on scrap paper. Randomly draw the first idea from the pile of prompts. Write on first topic for one minute. What is most important is to keep the pen moving continuously the entire time. Stop. Everyone reads aloud what they have written thus far (No other words can be spoken— only what you wrote!). “Pass” is allowed two times. All students respond with “Thank you.” Pick second topic. May continue writing about first topic or may start fresh with new topic. Two minute timer. Stop. Read writing thus far. Third topic, three minutes. Etc. For more details, see Natalie Goldberg’s (2005) *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*.
8. **ESL Express:** Set up a mailbox in your classroom for students to write personally to you and/or other teachers/staff in your building. By using modeling only, students begin to format their letters in the friendly letter style, correctly place sender and receiver “address” information (Mrs. Steele, ESL Room, Harrison Elementary) on the envelope, and will develop a different kind of relationship with you!

Want more ideas? Please see our website at

<http://projectalianza.wikispaces.com/>

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