

M4-S7: Writing for Meaning: Strategies for ELL Writing Across Learning Environments

CLH	<p>Hello Gina, and hello listeners! Welcome to Session 7 in Module 4 of the TALE Academy, Writing for Meaning: Strategies for ELL Writing Across Learning Environments.</p> <p>So Gina.</p>
GK	<p>Yes Christina.</p>
CLH	<p>At some point in our education as teachers, we were all exposed to the “big four” of the English language arts curriculum: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. No matter what subject or grade level we teach, reading, writing, speaking, and listening are fundamental to understanding and demonstrating learning in the content areas. In our last session, we looked at how to bridge speaking and listening skills – regardless of home language – to meaningful content learning. In this session, we will learn how to support English language learners in the writing process.</p>
GK	<p>And by writing process, for all you math and science teachers, we mean the sequence of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.</p>
CLH	<p>Correct.</p>
GK	<p>Because our ELLs should be doing everything their peers are doing. Throughout this module, we have emphasized the importance of centering grade-level content knowledge in the home language repertoires of ELLs. These strategies set high expectations while offering high levels of support. Requiring the use of only English limits ELLs who are just beginning to write in English or those who are multilingual and creative enough to want to express their ideas in multiple languages. As classroom teachers, we support ELLs in developing both their language development and grade-level ideas that deserve to be written.</p>
CLH	<p>Writing is frequently the language domain that is most challenging for students to develop, regardless of whether they are ELLs. Depending on their home languages – and whether or not they are literate in those languages – additional challenges for ELLs may include forming letters in a new script, writing in an opposing directionality, and learning new genres and organizational structures that can be cultural. Students who are not yet strong in their oral English may struggle with sound-symbol correspondence, choosing vocabulary, or forming grammatical sentences. It is important to evaluate ELL writing through a biliterate lens and scaffold their writing through such tools as mentor texts, brainstorming webs, paragraph frames, graphic organizers, word banks, think-pair-share interactions, and recomposition.</p>
GK	<p>All of those goodies are linked in the podcast transcript for you to find. The last one you mentioned is probably an unfamiliar term, sort of like “translanguaging” in</p>

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	<p>Session 3. So let's talk about it. In his work on visual literacy, <i>I See What You Mean</i>, Steve Moline tells us about the concept of recomposition:</p> <p>“Recomposing is simply reading information in one format and summarizing it in another format. For example, we might read a short biography of a famous person and summarize it as a timeline. This is recomposing paragraphs into a diagram. Or we could read a flowchart of an insect’s life cycle and summarize it as a written recount or explanation. This is recomposing a diagram into a paragraph.”</p> <p>Recomposing provides students the space to “read,” or process information, in one format and then transform it into another format. Recomposing is a powerful concept that allows ELLs to develop grade-level ideas in multiple ways without the heavy demand of language production. This strategy is sometimes called From Text to Graphics and Back Again.</p>
CLH	<p>Recomposing can be used in many ways to support ELLs in generating meaningful ideas while scaffolding language.</p> <p>One way is to use visuals to plan out ideas. The visuals can be wordless or labeled in the home language, in English, or a combination. The visuals can be pictures, sketches, diagrams, outlines, or another graphic organizer, such as a timeline, table, or Venn diagram, based on a text.</p> <p>Another way is to recompose visuals into oral statements. For example, students can first create a visual flowchart of an insect’s life cycle based on a text and then recompose it by presenting it orally, using sentence stems. An ELL can present grade-level ideas visually and then recompose the visual into an oral retelling in the home language or in English. Students can also record their oral retellings using sentence stems.</p>
GK	<p>Yup, and you can also recompose oral retellings/summaries into writing pieces. Once students have used the visuals or graphics to orally tell about the subject, the information can be recomposed into written paragraphs. For example, a student can use the recording of their oral retelling of the visual flowchart of an insect’s life cycle to make a written summary as a bilingual or English product.</p> <p>It’s a powerful strategy that supports writing while drawing on the full linguistic repertoire of the student.</p>
CLH	<p>Yes, so let's put recomposing into context and explore a scenario with Miguel, a bilingual student.</p> <p>Miguel’s language arts teacher has asked the class to write a report about the causes and effects of deforestation, using as much English as possible. This is a classic “explanatory writing process”. Let’s look at how scaffolds can be used during the</p>

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	<p>prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing stages of explanatory writing to support Miguel and other students.</p> <p>Again, you may want to dip into the transcript for this session to check out specific links.</p>
GK	<p>Okay, so the writing process starts with prewriting. Here's what that looks like as a scaffolded process in Miguel's class.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher tells the class that for the next 4 to 5 days, they will be learning about deforestation and writing an essay explaining the causes and effects of deforestation.• The teacher creates a "forest walk" with pictures around the room or online.• Students move about "the room" in small groups, discussing what they observe. Miguel is paired with students who speak English at intermediate and advanced fluency.• Once the students have seen the causes and effects of deforestation, they share their observations, using bilingual dictionaries as necessary. The teacher creates an anchor chart or word wall with words and phrases about the subject in English, separating any terms related to the causes of deforestation, such as logging and forest fires, from effects, such as soil erosion and droughts, and also using general academic language that will help the students in their writing, including phrases such as as a result of... or due to....• The teacher shows a short video clip on deforestation, and the students take notes using a graphic organizer with columns for causes vs. effects. Students who are newcomers have access to a version of the graphic organizer with still images drawn from the video that they can label. Before showing the video, the teacher announces that the clip portrays six causes and six effects of deforestation and challenges them to find them all.• After the students have seen the video once, the teacher lists the six causes and effects on the board with student help.• The teacher pairs the students and asks the students to decide who will be Partner A and who will be Partner B.• The teacher then plays the video clip for a second time on mute. Partner A uses the class anchor chart and his or her graphic organizer to act as the narrator of the video, explaining the causes and effects of deforestation. The teacher plays the video clip again on mute with Partner B acting as the narrator.

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CLH	<p>Those are wonderful pre-writing activities. Next, let's look at how the teacher scaffolds the drafting process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher reviews a version of their writing rubric specifically for this assignment on cause and effect.• The students read an explanatory mentor text on the causes and effects of pollution. They highlight words and phrases related to cause and effect, such as “sources include,” and the class discusses the organization of the text by rating it on their rubric.• The teacher then models how to draft some of her ideas from the anchor chart and graphic organizer into an essay explaining the causes and effects of deforestation.• The teacher establishes a translanguaging conference table or breakout room with a sign saying: “Aquí hablamos inglés y español,” which means “We speak English and Spanish here.”• This is a space where Miguel can ask for help when writing his piece in English; he can invite peers and/or a teacher. Bilingual dictionaries are available.• As needed, the teacher provides sentence stems or paragraph frames in English to students who need these models to begin and structure their writing.
GK	<p>The third step in the writing process is revision. Here are scaffolds for this phase of writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The teacher models revising her own writing further with more details and using some of the terms and phrases in the anchor charts.• The teacher reminds the students of their writing rubric. Students' reflections and teacher feedback include various translated language structures to improve writing.• Miguel reads his work aloud with others or in small groups with the teacher to assess for clarity. Students can ask questions and provide bilingual support for ideas.
CLH	<p>We're almost there, we just have to scaffold the editing and publishing elements..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on an anchor chart and the writing rubric, students edit their writing for features such as punctuation, spelling, sentence types, and verb forms – particularly if these were prior language objectives.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● If students used bilingual tools, such as dictionaries, texts, peer discussions, etc., to aid in their writing, their teacher asks them to fill out an exit ticket as a reflection on how it helped them in their writing process. The writing process concludes with scaffolding publication.● Now Miguel is ready for the last step in the writing process, publication.● He may have the option of adding visuals and diagrams or even re-translating into Spanish to analyze any differences, as time permits.● His family, teacher, and classmates can now read a digital version of his essay.
GK	<p>Way to go, Miguel! Next, let's explore two additional strategies for ELL writing across learning environments - sentences from boxes and round robin writing.</p> <p>For newcomers or writers in the early grades, sentences from boxes, introduced by the Center for Applied Linguistics, is a strategy that allows students to generate sentences orally by making connections across boxes with content ideas and then write sentences with the support of the boxes. It's actually pretty self-explanatory if you follow the link in the transcript.</p> <p>This format can also be done online with the randomizer offered by Flippity, which uses Google Sheets to form activities.</p>
CLH	<p>Round robin writing is an interactive writing activity. Here are instructions and a sample version of this activity based on a class reading of <i>Letter from a Birmingham Jail</i> by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create three worksheets with writing prompts, quotations, or other questions that will elicit writing related to your content area. On each worksheet, include three different boxes for student responses, and label them A, B, and C.2. Have students form groups of three. You may structure groups according to language backgrounds or other criteria of your choice.3. Hand out the worksheets and have students decide who will start with which worksheet.4. All students respond in the box labeled A for 5 to 10 minutes.5. Tell students to switch papers and read the original prompt or question, their peer's response, and then add their own ideas in Box B to respond to both their fellow student and the prompt.6. After 5 to 10 minutes, repeat the same procedure and have students respond in Box C.

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	<p>7. Once students have responded to all three prompts or questions, have students exchange papers to read all of their peers' responses to each item.</p> <p>8. Have students discuss their answers.</p> <p>For an online variation, you can set up this activity on Google Docs, Jamboard, or any discussion thread. The activity can be done asynchronously, as well. Students should return to provide feedback on their peers' responses.</p>
GK	<p>Now it's your turn! In your workbook, you will identify a writing task that you plan to use in the near future. Using what you've learned, you will consider the scaffolds you can use to support your ELLs with the writing task.</p> <p>The goal of the TALE Academy is to help teachers rethink education so that everyone – students, families, educators, school leaders, and communities – all have the opportunity to succeed. You've just added another tool to your toolbox when you support ELLs in writing for meaning across learning environments.</p> <p>Thanks for listening!</p>