INTRODUCTION 1

The Author's Flight

A young author develops writing wings.

Each takes a unique learning journey.

Each one writes the best that he can.

Why compare one against the other?

A writer is unique. Each passage is special.

An author's flight is limitless.

—Chapman and King, 2009 (adapted from "A Butterfly in the Wind," author unknown)

INFUSING WRITING INTO THE CONTENT AREAS

Each student is a writer with unique needs. The way a teacher influences each individual's personal use of the writing craft affects the learner's writing destiny.

Effective teachers present writing as a tool for learning and expressing ideas (Schmoker, 2007). They share various forms of writing with their students to model and illustrate the purposes and the pleasures that come from content mastery and authorship. Productive writing instructors know how students learn. They preassess the students' strengths, abilities, and interests and use the results strategically to plan successful writing experiences. They choose strategies that jog the learner's mind to use higher-order critical-thinking skills and creativity.

Effective writing teachers clearly explain the guidelines, expectations, and evaluation procedures for each writing activity. Routine, specific feedback with appropriate guidance is provided. Writers are led to see errors as opportunities for improvement. All writing attempts are supported. Each success is genuinely praised.

Writing is used more today than ever. Young people are writing informally on a daily basis, using electronic tools such as e-mail, blogs, text messages, and personal Web pages. This intriguing type of writing often becomes an obsession for students. Educators need to build on this writing mania instead of downplaying these

communication shortcuts. However, it is essential for students to learn how to apply the standards of writing in formal and informal situations.

Educators are urged to infuse writing into all content areas (National Commission on Writing, 2003). In each classroom, the teacher requires learners to have pencils and paper. Every instructor who gives writing assignments is a writing teacher. The activity may be very brief, such as writing a step-by-step procedure. Students need to see the relevant writing skills modeled daily and explained at each grade level and in all content areas.

Open-ended questions appear on many assignments as well as on tests. Often students know the information and can explain it to their peers. They bog down, however, when they try to place their thoughts on paper. A productive writer realizes, "If I can say it, I can write it." (Chapman & King, 2009, p. 2). Written work becomes a more accurate assessment of the learners' knowledge when they know how to write what they are thinking or saying to themselves.

Differentiated Writing Instruction

Differentiation is a philosophy that enables teachers to plan strategically in order to reach the needs of diverse learners in classrooms today to achieve targeted standards.

—Gregory & Chapman (2007, p. 2)

A major goal of education is for students to become self-directed learners as thinkers and productive problem solvers (Costa & Kallick, 2000). Differentiated instruction meets this need because each aspect of the individual is considered, including the student's intelligences, learning styles, and emotional states. In the differentiated writing classroom, teachers work with each student's unique needs. The goals for each learner include the following:

- To know how to apply information
- To think and write critically
- To think and write creatively
- To solve problems in the real world

These skills develop confident authors who are self-directed learners. To meet these needs, the teacher can differentiate the content, the instructional strategies and activities, the assessment tools, and the performance tasks (Gregory & Chapman, 2007).

Differentiating Content in Writing

- Break informational text writing assignments and materials into smaller chunks.
- Use simpler or more complex content vocabulary as needed.

- Tune into the learner's modalities to plan writing experiences with content information.
- Provide reference materials for writing at the student's reading level.
- Vary the genres in activities and assignments.
- Plan content area writing assignments according to the student's needs, as revealed in the assessment data.

Differentiating Assessment in Writing

- Collect writing samples to identify mastery of skills and standards.
- Vary assessment strategies.
- Use a variety of formal and informal assessment tools.
- Teach students how to use self-assessment tools.
- Use gathered data to plan for the learner's diverse needs.

Differentiating Performance Tasks in Writing

- Provide writing-task choices in the student's strongest learning styles and intelligences.
- Vary the ways students share their personal writing.
- Plan writing opportunities for students to show what they know.
- Use a variety of writing implements and materials.
- Form cluster teams to develop writing presentations.
- Challenge students to add writing to their projects and displays.

Examples:

captions	posters	portfolio entries	processing steps
procedures	explanations	fliers	summaries
banners	illustrations	graphic organizers	foldables

Differentiating Instructional Strategies

- Present writing activities that engage the students' unique learning modalities, styles, and intelligences.
- Plan writing activities in different genres.
- Use flexible grouping scenarios.
- Assign informal and formal writing assignments.
- Use a variety of writing activities with diverse topics and subjects.

We developed this resource to provide writing strategies for educators to use in daily plans along with textbook information and other resources to develop lifelong writers. We believe each idea, strategy, and activity can be used to assist learners in the diverse ways they process information for long-term memory, test success, and everyday use.

WRITING AND THE BRAIN

Making Mental Connections

According to David Sousa (2006), "Teachers try to change the human brain every day. The more they know about how it learns, the more successful they can be" (p. 3). The latest brain research provides information about the best approaches for engaging the student's mind for optimal learning. For instance, the learner's brain pays attention to personally meaningful information. When writing strategies are presented to link prior and new information with the student's practical world, the learner is more likely to remember and use it.

If the student has had prior experiences with a topic, mentioning the topic activates mental pictures and feelings. Consider the student's prior writing experiences in planning so new skills and strategies are based on the learner's experiences and level of understanding. (See, for example, the adjustable assignments in Figures 4.4, 5.7, and 5.8.)

Building Long-Term Memory

A student's ability to remember new information depends on previous knowledge (Willingham, 2006). Teachers plan new writing concepts and knowledge to make connections with the student's prior knowledge. New information is reconstructed to fit the learner's schema as it is stored in memory.

The writer needs to think about the best way to store learned information. Use the term *metamemory* to emphasize the importance of thinking about the memory strategy being used. Share the following with the students:

If I see the purpose,

If I understand it,

If I know how to use it,

If I need it,

I will remember it and use it.

—Chapman and King

Achieving a State of Flow

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) studied motivation and described optimal learning experiences as a state of flow. *Flow* is the state of mind that occurs when the student is totally immersed in a writing activity. In this state, the learner concentrates on the task at hand, enjoys it, and is not easily distracted. Individuals enter the state of flow while engaging in a favorite or high-interest writing activity. Flow does not occur when the learner is bored or frustrated. The desire to be involved is obvious in most

students. Set the stage for the learner to enter into a state of flow by presenting challenging, successful writing experiences.

RATIONALE FOR WRITING IN THE CONTENT AREAS

Writers Write to Demonstrate Understanding

Teachers use writing assignments in content areas because they provide easy, quick assessments of a student's knowledge. There is not enough time to listen to each student's oral responses. Writing is one of the most efficient ways to check individual understanding (Fisher & Frey, 2007).

Writers Write to Enhance Learning and Memory

Writing activates memory as information enters the learner's schema and mental pathways. For information to enter long-term memory, the student has to connect prior experiences and current information to build new learning. Writing activities create these bridges, making it easier for learners to recall information for academic activities, including tests and daily use.

Writing is a tool for learning. The author identifies information stored in memory and organizes it so the reader or listener understands it. This mental processing provides the author with opportunities to think about the information as it is recalled and to think about it again while writing. Langer and Applebee's seminal research (1987) indicated that the kind of manipulation of content that occurs when students write leads to an increased understanding of that content.

Writers Write to Inform and to Express Important Ideas in the Real World

To make writing experiences meaningful, the student understands the value of the skill. The learner needs to see many ways to use it in his or her immediate world and the future role it will play. In the real world, writing is used to inform, to learn, and to express ideas. Use some of the following ideas about the many reasons writers write in a discussion to emphasize the importance of this skill:

- Analyze and solve problems.
- Express feelings, including anger, joy, laughter, or sadness.
- Share secrets, personal ideas, and interests.
- Share experiences, wildest ideas, and discoveries.
- Record information.
- Share thoughts with others.

- Appreciate the beauty and magic of language.
- Remember information for later use or study.
- Play with words, thoughts, and ideas.
- Relax and enjoy self-expression.
- Brainstorm and journal.
- Become a published author.

TURN ON THE WRITER

Most toddlers find joy in holding a pencil in their hands. After a few years, however, many students respond to writing activities and assignments as dreaded experiences. Why do these negative feelings develop? Many students receive negative feedback through grades and informal comments from adults. They become convinced that they cannot write. These learners build barriers to writing experiences because they fear failure.

In many classrooms, educators emphasize writing mechanics and the "look" of the work. However, writing involves complex problem-solving techniques, so more emphasis should be placed on getting the information on paper. The most valuable aspects of each writing experience are the content, the organization, and the author's style as an effective communicator.

Long, boring assignments turn off the learner's desire to write. Students are often turned off when they hear "Answer the questions at the end of the chapter," or "Write the list of words and the definitions." These writing assignments are viewed as the "same old, same old." It is a shame that the student's natural desire to write is turned off so easily. Educators need to be aware of emotional barriers and turn on enthusiasm for writing. Design each experience strategically for the learner to visualize himself or herself as a successful, productive writer. Remember, the student's attitude leads to altitude!

The chart in Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the writing tools and strategies included in this resource to meet young authors' needs, to turn on the writer, and to enrich the content information.

EVERY TEACHER IS A WRITING TEACHER: THE POWER IS YOURS!

Every class has writing assignments. It is not realistic for a teacher to say, "This is not a writing class. These students need to learn writing skills in language arts classes!" or, "If they have not learned the writing skills by now, they are not capable of learning them." All educators must assume these challenges.

Educators need to take an inventory of their personal feelings related to teaching young writers. According to Marjorie Frank in *If You're Trying to Teach Kids How to Write . . . You've Gotta Have This Book!* (1995) teachers need to understand their

Figure 1.1 An Overview of the Book: Differentiated Instructional Strategies for Writing in the Content Areas

Creating a Climate for Writing	*Knowing the Writer*	*Differentiating the Writing Process and Flexible Grouping*	*Instructional Strategies and Activities*	*Planning, Assessing, and Evaluating Writing*
Effective Writing Environment • Instill self-efficacy. • Develop internal motivation. • Develop self-regulated learners. A Safe and Positive Atmosphere • Slogans and poster ideas • The four Bs for writing • Assessing the affective writing environment A Physical Environment for Writing • Razzmatazz to thingamajigs • Cool tools • Material magic • Make the size fit. • Rainbow writing • Ready references • Teacher-created displays • Student-created displays Finding the "Write Spot" • Sensational stations Assessing the Physical Writing Environment	Stages of a Writer • Scribbler • Picture maker • Storyteller • Letter shaker • Copier • Sound maker • Sentence maker • Fluent writer Diagnosing the Writing Characters • Drawing Don • Insecure Inez • Plagiarizing Paul • Procrastinating Polly • Stumped Stan • Wordy Wilma • Refusing Randy • E. L. L. Ella • Author Arthur More Common Writing Problems and Interventions Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences • Gardner's multiple intelligences theory • Sternberg's triarchic model • Student surveys	Types of Writing • Descriptive • Expository • Persuasive • Narrative • Using the Four Types The Block Party The Writing Process • Process the process. • Practice the process. Step 1. Getting Started: Prewriting Step 2. Sloppy Copy: First Draft Step 3. Hamming It Up: Revision Step 4. Tuning It Up: Editing Step 5. Neat Sheet: Final Copy Step 6. Publishing: Sharing and Celebrating Flexible Grouping T-Total group A-Alone P-Partner S-Small group	Teaching Each Writing Strategy Strategically Informational Text Writing and Critical Thinking Writing Strategies for English-Language Learners Formats and Genres Using Personification to Process Content Information Planning for Individual Needs • Choice boards • Agendas • Individualized writing projects • Language experience activities Writing Strategies • Brainstorming • Journaling Gathering Research • Proposals and contracts • Teacher's role • Student's role • Ways to research a topic • Presenting research with "zippidy-do" • Research conferences Note Taking • For listening • For reading • Research note cards Developing Outlines and Rubrics Writing Essays Rhymes and Riddles Getting to Know Text Characters Sequencing With Graphic Organizers Writing From A to Z	Lesson Planning Model • Before writing • During writing • After writing Effective Assessment Tools • Formal • Informal • Prepare for assessment scenes • Rubric for essays • Scales • Project rubric • Portfolios • Grading

"attitudes and beliefs, fears and abilities" (p. 19). An individual's self-efficacy, or belief in his or her success as a writing teacher, impacts the way the activities are approached. Each teacher has the power to change the quality of students' lives by giving them the writing skills they need for academic and personal success.

A Golden Opportunity

Each teacher has a golden opportunity to model and teach writing purposes and skills, as well as to make writing assignments fulfilling experiences for students. Textbooks and materials provide excellent facts and concepts to involve and challenge young authors. The activities expose learners to the different genres, styles, and types of writing in the real world. They grow in their ability to write with each experience in and out of the classroom. The teacher's passion for the subject is instilled in students through intriguing hooks, modeling, and meaningful writing activities. One teacher's interest can excite learners and build writing confidence and ability. Stimulating assignments motivate students to become fluent authors.

The strategies and activities in this resource were created by the authors or adapted from effective practices. Many lists, definitions, and activities are designed for the student to use. Words of encouragement, tips, and practical applications are included. Each writing tool is designed to enhance thinking and learning in differentiated classrooms.

Our Mission

Our mission is twofold: (1) to teach students how to use writing as an effective learning tool and (2) to encourage and assist all teachers as they use writing as a valuable component of differentiated instruction. Educators often target skills for writing improvement in daily lessons and test preparations. However, we seldom see students' self-satisfaction, enjoyment, empowerment, or confidence considered in formal plans. Explicitly state the purpose for each skill, strategy, or experience. Writers should find the activity appealing to have a desire to complete the task.

Refer to each writer as an *author*. The personal title will increase the learner's confidence. Throughout this guide, writers are referred to as authors. Each learner must believe in his or her ability as an author and know that each writing attempt will be respected and appreciated.

We hope the ideas presented are used and adapted to teaching information in all curriculum areas while developing successful, confident, enthusiastic authors.