Teaching English Language Learners
In Mainstream Classrooms

Focus on Writing
Empowerment

“Few of us would question that social and economic empowerment is related to being able to use the spoken and written forms of language effectively. Those who can use the language forms which the culture values are able to exert more control over their lives than those who can’t. Given this relationship between language control and empowerment it is important for teachers to understand the processes involved in getting control of different kinds of textual forms.”

Brian Cambourne and Hazel Brown in 1987 cited in SAPPA
By Diana

The Aletics carnival

On the 20th of June 2012 the Aletics carnival was held.

Firstly we sat down in our house. Then we had our first races. After that we spit up into groups the frist I went to was captain ball then we went to herdles after herdles we went to discus. After discus we went to shot put. After shot put we went to hammer throw after hammer throw went to sack racing after sack racing.
21.6.12  ATHELETICS  E. Michael
Carnival
Yesterday was a enjoyable able day and exciting.
Yesterday in the beginning me, Harry, Feng, Matthew, and Dario was running then I came third.
Dario came second and Matthew came first.
After lunch we went in final I came last.
At least I got one ribbon cause I came third
In hundred meteres.
At lunch I bought some sausage roll and creaming soda.
I love hudreles cause you just have to run over the metal.
WARRATAH is the best and we hope we will won the Atheletics carnival.
What is successful writing?

A writer is successful if they can create a text that achieves its purpose by communicating to its audience the message it was meant to convey in context. A text is a series of semantic choices created in a social context and can be assessed as effective in two main areas: register and text structure.
What is successful writing?

A successful writer is someone with:

1. an understanding of the context of situation and context of culture
2. a clear and authentic purpose for writing
3. a wide knowledge of the field they are writing about
4. an understanding of the structure and the grammar required to accurately create that text type
5. an understanding of the difference between the written and spoken modes of communication.
6. the English knowledge to manipulate the language to suit their purpose in context
7. a clear idea who their audience will be
8. confidence to write!
What is successful writing?

1. Context of culture and Context of situation:
Context is an important and difficult concept to explain to students. Writing in the context of a culture you are not part of makes the process very difficult. In Australia, students are required to speak and write in standard Australian English using the text types described above across key learning areas. The dominant culture determines the accepted language use but so does the situation in which the language is being constructed.
What is successful writing?

1. **Context of culture**: age, gender, race, socio-economic status, generation, family history, country of birth, family background, interests and personality can potentially change the language used to write a text. What is valued may differ from culture to culture and person to person.

**Context of situation**: the language choices a writer must make, including the audience and the channel of communication. Written text can differ from emails to writing in an exam, an assignment, a letter to the editor or a text message.
What is successful writing?

2. A real purpose for writing:

having a real purpose for writing enables the writer can make specific choices about the language they use. If a writer is persuading, they will make different language choices than if they were describing or recounting, though the subject may stay the same.
What is successful writing?

3. Knowledge of the subject they are writing about (field)

Successful writers demonstrate an understanding of the topic. It is impossible to write knowledgably about something you haven’t learnt about. As a teacher this is where the balance between topic knowledge and text production is vital. If you provide students with all the support to write a specific text but limit the topic knowledge they will fail in the writing task because they lack depth in topic knowledge.
What is successful writing?

4. Understanding the structure and grammatical features of the specific text type. NSW Board of Studies, 1998

All text types have a structure and specific grammatical features. Consider, for example, adjectives, which are commonly used in narrative texts to describe a character or a setting. They are also used in persuasive texts to describe, yet play a critically different role. Many EL students have difficulty understanding the role grammar plays in different texts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary description</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Literary recount</th>
<th>Poetry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To describe, in literary terms, natural, physical, cultural and individual phenomena. May be part of a larger text such as a narrative.</td>
<td>To record events and respond to them in a personal way. There is no specific sequence. Used as a tool to develop recount and narrative.</td>
<td>A pattern of events, with a problem or unexpected outcomes that entertain and instruct the reader or listener. The behaviour patterns are often highly valued. The problems provide readers with opportunities to speculate on resolution.</td>
<td>To tell a sequence of events so that it entertains with expressions of attitude and feeling to build a relationship between the reader or speaker and writer.</td>
<td>An aesthetic experience that works mainly through our emotions, sensory experiences and imaginative perceptions. Devices such as rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia are emphasised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information report</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Exposition</td>
<td>Factual description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To present information and classify a general class of things whether artificial or natural.</td>
<td>To tell how and why things occur in scientific and technical fields.</td>
<td>To explore more than one side of an issue. To discover various perspectives before coming to an informed decision.</td>
<td>To argue a case for or against a particular point of view.</td>
<td>To describe a particular living, non-living or natural phenomenon. Often part of a large text such as an information report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual recount</td>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Personal response</td>
<td>Procedural recount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To document a series of events as they occurred and evaluate their significance in some way.</td>
<td>How to do something. This may include instructions on how to carry out a task, rules of a game or directions on how to get somewhere.</td>
<td>A summary or analysis of a literary text with an assessment as to its appeal.</td>
<td>To summarise and respond personally to a text.</td>
<td>A record, in sequential order, the steps taken to achieve a particular goal or outcome.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is successful writing?

5. Understanding of the difference between the written and spoken modes of communication.

A successful writer knows that in order be effective they must be well-organised, succinct and appropriate. They do not have the luxury of face-to-face contact to ensure meaning is clear, or to repair a breakdown. You can probably think of many throwaway lines people use in conversation such as ‘what I mean is... to put that another way... in other words... you know... it’s like... you know what I mean?’ but not in writing.
What is successful writing?

6. Understanding that English language choices can be made to suit the purpose and the audience:

A writer can and should manipulate language in order to suit both purpose and audience. This knowledge leads the writer to choose a *text-type* suited to the purpose for which they are writing.
What is successful writing?

7. A clear idea of their audience (known as tenor):

It is not uncommon for students to be writing a text simply for the teacher to mark. Yet if the audience is not clear they will not be able to make accurate language choices.

Knowing your audience will dictate the language choices you make in different ways:

The relationship you have with your audience changes the language choices you make. Consider for example the relationship between the writer and the reader in the following emails.
Hi Marg,
Sorry I can’t make the meeting. Something came up... You know what it’s like out there! Can we make another time? Let me know ASAP.
Love
Janet

Dear Ms Turnbull
I am sorry but I will unable to attend the consultation meeting planned for next Tuesday at 9:00am. I have a previous engagement that I cannot avoid.
If it is convenient to arrange to meet at another time I will make every effort to attend. Please let me know if this is possible.
Regards
Janet Freeman
What is successful writing?

The difference in knowledge between the writer and the audience.

- Imagine you are explaining a cooking process. Consider the language choices you would make if you knew your audience was an experienced cook and how they would differ if they were a beginner.

The relative power the writer has over their audience.

- Think how you would write asking someone to do something if you were the boss to an employee, a wife to a husband, a teacher to his or her class, and consider how the language might change.
What is successful writing?

The confidence to write.

It is with the above knowledge that we are confident writers. We never write without an audience or a purpose and while we may write on subjects somewhat removed from our experience we know where to go to check our facts (or we can confidently make them up and sound plausible).
Talking to support writing

Writing is not the same as speaking or reading but, as Brian Gray (1990: 113) points out,

‘It is doubtful if children can produce and understand written texts in any depth unless they can orally produce texts of that type themselves’.
Talking to support writing

We need to harness the capacity of our students’ spoken language ability in order to support their writing in academic settings.

*Imagine a student telling you why they had not completed an assignment. They might begin with a recount of events. This leads to an explanation of why the assignment could not be completed, then this may quite possibly move into persuasive language in order to convince you that they should have an extension to complete the assignment.*

You may, of course, think the whole explanation is a narrative, but why not harness this ability?
Why is learning about talk important?
## Language focus across the curriculum

(with reference to text types as discussed in the *English K–6 Syllabus* (NSW Board of Studies, 1998: pp 66–71)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LANGUAGE FOCUS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES OF LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS</th>
<th>SPOKEN AND WRITTEN TEXT TYPES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describing</td>
<td>naming, describing, observing, defining, classifying, generalising, qualifying, referring, comparing, contrasting ...</td>
<td>factual description, information report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recounting</td>
<td>recounting, retelling, narrating, describing ...</td>
<td>literary recount, narrative observation, factual recount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>recalling, recounting, revising, describing, defining, clarifying, comparing, contrasting, deciding, choosing, justifying, synthesising, speculating, hypothesising, evaluating, imagining ...</td>
<td>personal response review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>describing, ordering, commanding, listening, clarifying, noting, expressing conditions ...</td>
<td>procedural recount, procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining</td>
<td>expressing causality/opinion/reasons/conditions, elaborating, exemplifying, referring, reiterating, emphasising ...</td>
<td>explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persuading</td>
<td>previewing, expressing opinion, stating, reasoning, generalising, analysing, qualifying, arguing, refuting, explaining, referring, concluding, summarising, exemplifying, clarifying, hypothesising, extrapolating, justifying, evaluating, synthesising ...</td>
<td>exposition, discussion, review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Negotiating    | *learning* recalling, reflecting, rehearsing, clarifying, correcting, calculating, problem solving, questioning, answering, stating, informing, elaborating, evaluating, deducing, linking, referring ...  
*interacting* greeting, leave taking, requesting, inviting, apologising, suggesting, commanding, claiming, reiterating, emphasising, rephrasing, interrupting, turn taking, agreeing, disagreeing, confirming ... | exposition, discussion, response |
Talking to support writing

Students’ understandings of social purpose and context will influence how they compose a text. Students need to be aware of how a text can be structured according to the demands of a task in a particular situation and the impact of the structure on the listener. Students need to experiment and try out different structures, experimenting with and challenging structures at other times.

Mode continuum

There are clear differences between spoken and written language use. Writing is usually highly organised, linear, economical and explicit. Speaking on the other hand, often appears disorganised, circular and implicit (Halliday, 1985). Like written language, spoken language has different purposes and hence significantly different grammatical features. The skills, strategies and specific language needed to participate in a group activity that involves problem-solving orally, differs from those used in delivering an oral report.

The mode continuum (reflecting the use of spoken language)
Pauline Jones (Ed) (1996) Talking to Learn, PETA, Sydney

Focus on Writing 2012
Talking to support writing

(Me) Tell me how to get up the tree
(C) Put you leg over here
(Me) Like this?
(C) Yeah that’s good. Now let go of this one.
(Me) Let it go now?
(C) Now...yes and go to this one here...
(Me) oh uh oh
(C) Look here at... Yes that’s good
(Me) It’s too high up maybe?
(C) No it’s ok it is safe.
Talking to support writing

Me - Tell me how to climb the tree
J - Preferably you need to begin with your left foot here at the fork in the branches. Then select the best branch to hold on to. Once you have done that you pull yourself up. (It does require a bit of upper body strength) Then you continue climbing on up choosing the best branch until there are no more that will take your weight. That does take a bit of judgment of course but you’ll figure that out!
Planning for writing

• In order for students to develop academic language they need to first be asked to ‘notice’ the target language. Students need substantial exposure to the target language in context.

• Students then need to ‘recycle’ the target language through a range of group and pair activities to that involve talking about the topic. This way, they hear it and say it in context.

• Once students have seen, heard, said, read and written the target language in the context of the topic, through a range of suitable activities, they may feel ready to ‘recast’ the target language in a less contextualised setting such as independent writing.

• Once students have completed an independent piece of writing, they need opportunities to on their writing with peers and the teacher in order to ‘consolidate’ this understanding.
Planning for writing

1. Building topic knowledge
2. Building text knowledge
3. Guided activities to develop vocabulary and text knowledge
4. Creating a text independently
5. Reflecting on language choices

On-going Assessment of and by students

Focus on Writing 2012
Planning for writing
Building topic knowledge
Planning for writing

Beginning at the sentence level supports the students’ understanding of the topic through description and vocabulary-building before developing the more complex structures of a whole text.

Create this sentence as I have done below:

I bought a burger. Then ask key questions -
What sort of burger is it? What did it come with
Where did you get it? Why and when?

I bought a really delicious gourmet beef burger with salad on it from the fancy place near the beach for lunch on Saturday.
Planning for writing

Building knowledge about the text

Topic and purpose
What text type?

Why should minced beef patties always be cooked all the way through?
Planning for writing

‘Once upon a time a bunch of ingredients got together to make beef burgers for a children’s party. The minced beef, herbs and spices shaped themselves into patties and hopped onto the barbecue to cook while the buns lightly toasted themselves under the grill.

Suddenly one of the patties left the grill undercooked. This was a disaster! If a human eats uncooked beef mince they risk food poisoning from E. coli bacteria. What were the other patties to do? Their reputations as party food were at stake!

Through ruthless and devious means, the remaining patties contrived to force the miscreant off the side of the barbecue and into the mud, rendering it inedible. Luckily it was thrown into the garbage by a helpful human. The beef burgers’ reputation survived and no humans were infected.’
‘Ground beef safety standards are strict because ground meats have more exposed surface area, which gives bacteria more opportunities to contaminate the meat. Hamburgers should be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 71°C all the way through to kill the bacteria E. coli.

‘E. coli’ is a type of bacteria that can cause food poisoning in humans. Sometimes referred to as ‘hamburger disease’ because it can be transmitted through undercooked ground beef.’
Planning for writing

Guided practice of language and text

Barrier activity/s

Clines –

- Hot: burning, scorching, blistering, sizzling, searing, broiling, warm, cool, tepid, cold, scalding, heated.
- Thoroughly: carefully, systematically, methodically, precisely, meticulously, painstakingly, conscientiously, assiduously.

Text strips

Adverbial sort

Cloze passage

There are many kinds of cloze activities you can use: reverse cloze, not needed cloze and read around cloze for example (see Dufficy (2010) for more information).

Flow charts
Planning for writing

Barrier activity/s
Planning for writing

Clines – adjectival and adverbial

- Hot: burning, scorching, blistering, sizzling, searing, broiling, warm, cool, tepid, cold, scalding, heated.

- Thoroughly: carefully, systematically, methodically, precisely, meticulously, painstakingly, conscientiously, assiduously.

And many others
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place (where)</th>
<th>Time (for how long or when)</th>
<th>Manner (in what way)</th>
<th>Cause (why)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>into a large bowl</td>
<td>for at least 30 minutes.</td>
<td>Evenly with your hands</td>
<td>in order to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on each side</td>
<td>for about 4 minutes or</td>
<td>into 6 equal portions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the fridge</td>
<td>until browned and cooked through</td>
<td>carefully with your hands into a patty about: 10cm in diameter and 1.5cm thick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>under the preheated grill</td>
<td>on high for 1 minute or</td>
<td>securely with plastic wrap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in a large, non-stick frying pan over medium-low heat</td>
<td>until golden</td>
<td>with the remaining oil and patties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onto a tray lined with-greaseproof paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>with the sliced tomato, tomato sauce and shredded lettuce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on the bottom halves of the toasted hamburger buns</td>
<td></td>
<td>lightly with salt and pepper to taste.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on a plate</td>
<td></td>
<td>with the hamburger bun tops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adverbial sort
Planning for writing

Flow chart for cooking a hamburger

1. Place the beef mince, onion, garlic chutney, herbs, breadcrumbs and egg into a large bowl and season with salt and pepper. Mix using your hands until evenly combined.

2. Divide the mixture into 6 equal portions and shape each portion with your hands into a patty about: 10cm in diameter and 1.5cm thick.

3. Place the patties onto a tray lined with greaseproof paper. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.

4. Heat half the olive oil in a large, non-stick frying pan over medium-low heat and cook 3 patties for about 4 minutes on each side or until browned and cooked through.

5. Are they cooked all the way through?
   - NO
   - YES

6. Continue cooking until cooked all the way through.

7. Put the patties on a plate, set aside and keep warm. Repeat with the remaining oil and patties.

8. Preheat grill on high. Place the hamburger buns, cut-side up, under the preheated grill and toast for 1 minute or until golden.

9. Lay the patties on the bottom halves of the toasted hamburger buns. Top each with the sliced tomato, tomato sauce and shredded lettuce, sprinkle with salt and pepper and then cover with the hamburger bun tops.
Planning for writing

Guided practice of language and text

Cloze passage

There are many kinds of cloze activities you can use: reverse cloze, not needed cloze and read around cloze for example (see Dufficy (2010) for more information).

Flow charts
Independent practice of text

Provide a very explicit rubric for your students so they know what you want them to write and how well you want them to write it, as in the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write a recipe <em>for your peers</em> to make a hamburger.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include all the ingredients that would make a healthy hamburger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use language that your peers will understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a procedure format as used in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the use of verbs and adverbs at the beginning of each step and make certain to include all the necessary information needed to describe where, how and for how long.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be clear and concise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Independent practice of text**

Reflection and self-assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing rubric</th>
<th>Student comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a recipe for your peers to make a hamburger (Have I achieved my purpose?)</td>
<td>Yes, I have written to instruct someone in my class on how to make a hamburger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include all the ingredients that would make a healthy hamburger (Have I covered the topic?)</td>
<td>Yes, I was giving a procedure on cooking a healthy hamburger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use language that your peers will understand (Have I aimed my writing at the right audience and made good language choices for my audience?)</td>
<td>Yes, they will understand my language. I made it simple enough for them to follow. The audience was my friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a procedure format as used in class (Have I used the correct text structure?)</td>
<td>Yes, I wrote in short sentences providing a sentence for each step of the recipe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the use of verbs and adverbs at the beginning of each step and made certain to include all the necessary information needed to describe where, how and for how long (Have I used the correct grammar structures?)</td>
<td>Yes, I used a range of verbs, at the beginning of the sentence and I was clear in my use of prepositions and included the important information such as cooking time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be clear and concise (Have I made sense of the writing?)</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In conclusion...

All students are learning to write in an academic way and will continue to build on what you teach them throughout their lives as they encounter situations where they are expected to write with increasing sophistication across a range of topics in many different genres. You are teaching your students the skills for successful writing.
Get Resources !!!

Please go to my WIKI to get any of the resources you have seen here today.

http://primaryeslteachersnetwork.wikispaces.com/