

A Writing Model

*An Information Handbook
For
Frontier School Division*



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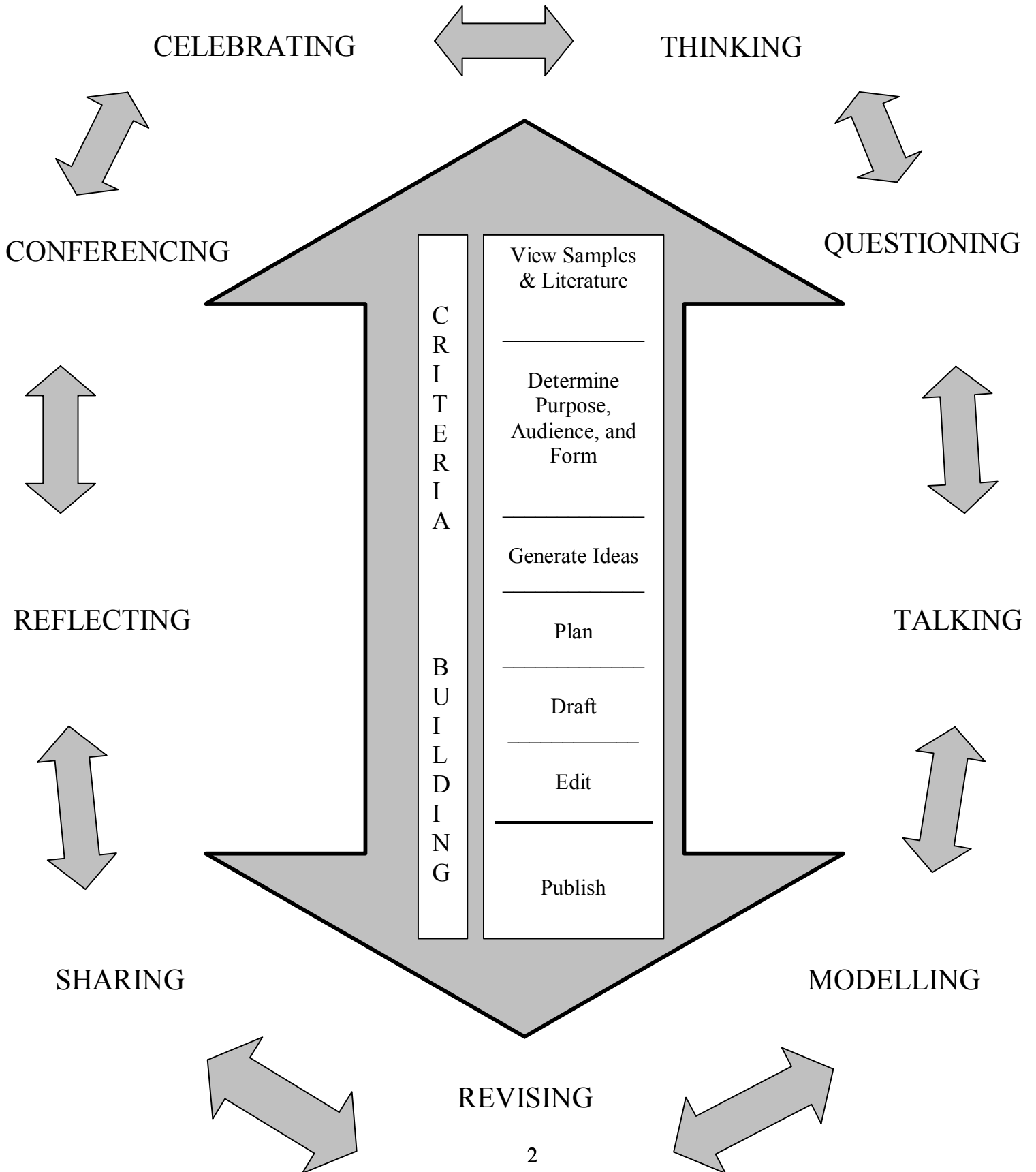
All students are writers and should see themselves as such. If we believe this, then the following principles will serve as the basis for teaching writing.

- Students first need time to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences orally.
- Quality literature provides an excellent model for what good writers do.
- The teacher plays a vital role in creating a safe risk-taking, child-centred environment to encourage student writers.
- All writers need a purpose for writing, regular time to write, an audience that will provide feedback, and a sense of ownership for their writing.
- Students can help other students become effective writers.
- Modelling by the teacher is an effective, critical teaching strategy.
- A child's attitude about writing can be positively influenced by having some freedom to choose topics.
- It is important that students and teachers understand the value of the process of writing which may or may not lead to a published piece.

Over the years various descriptions of the process of writing have been documented. However, few visual models exist. The model on the following page has been designed incorporating various components of successful writing practices. During the process of writing, the time and order of some of these elements will vary according to the specific demands of the assignment (form, audience, etc.).

This writing model represents writing as a recursive process which involves reflective thinking: focusing on what is required, what has been done, and what needs to be done. This model guides students to become independent learners and writers. The elements contained in this model will provide metacognitive opportunity and practice for students.

A WRITING MODEL



There are a number of elements in this writing model. Each one will be described in the pages that follow.

View Samples and Literature

Students need to be exposed to a wide variety of quality literature which includes examples of different forms and genres. Ongoing exposure is necessary and may take a considerable amount of time. By exposing students to quality literature through read alouds or shared reading, they are “reading like a writer (and eventually) writing like a reader”.

Examples of literature could include:

- poems
- picture books for all grade levels
- visuals
- excerpts from written work
- expository text
- media

Determine Purpose, Audience, and Form

It is essential that students know the purpose for their writing, the intended audience, and the appropriate form based on their topic and the context. All students should experience self-selecting these writing variables as well as being given a specific writing task where some or all of these variables are predetermined.

Example:

- Purpose (Why am I writing?): to persuade
- Audience (Who will read my writing?): principal/school committee
- Form (What form will best convey my message?): letter
- Topic (What am I writing about?): to be able to hold an evening school dance
- Context (Where/when will your audience read this?): next school committee meeting

Generate Ideas

In order to produce a well written piece of work, students need to generate a wide variety of ideas. The power of the written work will depend on how meaningful the idea is to the writer or the connections that the writer can make to the idea.

Some suggestions for generating ideas are:

- Brainstorm
- Think Pair Share
- Gallery Walk
- Sharing personal experiences
- Examining pictures

Plan/Organize

Once students begin to generate ideas and select their writing variables, they need to decide how to organize their ideas and information. It is important to remember that some students are capable of keeping their ideas organized in their heads while others may need the teacher to suggest a frame or graphic organizer on which to record their ideas.

Draft

Drafting is the time for getting the initial ideas onto paper or a computer screen. Reinforce the importance of the ideas rather than worrying about the mechanics or conventions. It is best to just let the students write or type based on their discussions, planning, questioning, and criteria building.

Strategy suggestions when drafting:

- Write or type using the “skip a line” idea. This allows for easier editing and revising later on. Double spacing also allows the student to “cut” up their writing to move it around in the revision stages.
- Use only one side of the paper
- Students must be taught and expected to label and date every piece of paper that they write on.
- Provide a variety of writing tools: paper, sticky notes, index cards, pens, pencils, markers, computers, tape recorders, word processors.
- Celebrate with your students every attempt to draft and encourage students to keep going - drafting can be quite difficult.
- Encourage students to take a mini mental break by putting their draft away for awhile so that they can come back to it with “fresh eyes”

Edit

Editing can occur anytime in the writing process but most often it is done once the draft has been completed and revisions for clarity have been made. Having children edit their own work will be much easier if you set editing guidelines for your students early in the school year. It is also a good idea to model, share and guide your students through the editing process frequently so that they can demonstrate this independently.

If a child is publishing their writing, it is highly recommended that they take their piece through three distinct editing stages:

1. Self-Edit – Reading through, noting questionable spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
2. Peer Edit – Having a classmate read the piece to assist with the editing.
3. Teacher Edit – This is a face-to-face conference that involves the teacher giving descriptive feedback which allows the student to make changes that will improve their writing.

There are numerous editing symbols that can be used. All are acceptable, however as a school, one set should be chosen to use throughout the grade levels to insure practice and transfer of skills. For some suggested editing symbols see Appendix A of this document.

Publish

Publishing is the time to share your work with a public audience. Recent technological advances allow students to easily produce, revise, edit, and enhance their writing. There are a variety of ways to publish student writing which may include:

- Bulletin board display
- Anthology
- School/community newsletter
- School/class website
- Reading it over the intercom

Criteria Building

Criteria are the descriptors by which we value and judge a piece of writing. By building criteria, we are deciding what counts and providing students with a way of evaluating their own writing.

Teachers can set criteria for or with their students. Using samples of quality writing, students and teachers together can develop a list of criteria that identifies what is important for that type of writing.

When students are given the opportunity to go through the process of setting criteria they learn what quality looks like and learn to take ownership of their own learning. Shared criteria building has benefits for teachers as well; it informs the teacher of what their students have learned about writing.

A four step process for setting criteria:

- Brainstorm and/or view samples
- Sort and categorize
- Make and post a T-chart
- Add, revise and refine

Thinking

Thinking occurs at all points during the process of writing. Teachers must continually seek ways to engage their students. By providing stimulating opportunities, teachers will find students more motivated to probe and think more deeply about their writing.

Questioning

Questioning is the catalyst that propels the writer on the journey through the writing process. Students should be given ample opportunity and strategies to formulate questions that will help them develop their ideas. Questioning as a writer requires students to question themselves and others in order to manage ideas and information.

Students may question:

- their choices as they write
- other writers
- the validity of sources

in order

- to clarify their ideas and the ideas of others
- to establish and reflect on criteria
- to confirm their choices and make revisions
- to identify information needs

Talking

Talking needs to take place during all phases of writing to allow students to develop their ideas. Talking allows students to hear other perspectives and additional information on their topic which broadens their understanding and leads to better writing. Not all students will be comfortable with talking about their writing. Teachers need to be aware of this and facilitate activities that will create a risk-free learning environment.

Modelling

Modelling the process of writing is critical. Students should be shown a variety of different forms and genres. Students also need time to practice these strategies, forms and genres to determine which ones best suit their individual style and writing needs. Teachers should also model revision based on criteria.

Revising

Revision is the process of refining, clarifying, and improving a piece of writing according to the criteria which has been developed by the teacher or co-created by the teacher and students. Criteria, such as length, form, audience, purpose, style, diction, tone and so on, need to be clearly established in the writer's mind before writing begins.

Sharing

Although in some circumstances students will be writing solely for themselves, there will also be times they will want to share with others. This can be very beneficial for gaining

confidence as well as receiving feedback. Technology provides unique ways for students to share writing with others outside the school or community. Some examples are electronic portfolios (such as ePearl), blogs, wikis and email.

Reflecting

Self-reflection is a difficult but necessary part of the writing process. It is crucial for self-assessment, goal setting and growth as a writer. Teachers should model reflection in their own writing through write alouds and make their thinking visible to the students. Time must be set aside for students to regularly reflect on their writing with reference to criteria.

Conferencing

Conferencing is a meeting between a writer and a peer or teacher for the purpose of editing or revising a piece of writing based on predetermined criteria. When conferencing is focused on criteria and the writer is given descriptive feedback based on these criteria, the conferencing experience is more meaningful and rewarding for both parties.

Celebrating

Celebration time allows for a community of writers to come together and recognize their accomplishments. The atmosphere during this event should be positive, supportive, and inclusive. Some ideas for celebratory events include:

- author's chair
- student involved conferences
- portfolio party or picnic
- presentation to another class or school assembly
- book launching
- children as author's reading party

Assessment During the Writing Process

Assessment is ongoing and can occur at any point in the writing process. A variety of assessment strategies can be used including anecdotal records, criteria checklists, rubrics, focused observations, and the writing continuum.

It is important to use the Frontier School Division Writing Continuum to determine where the students are at the beginning of the year. By collecting three or more samples of student's writing, the teacher should be able to get a clear picture of where the child is and where he/she needs to go. The continua should be used to assess and guide instruction throughout the year.

Focused observation should be based on curricular outcomes, criteria, continua, or individual academic or behavioural needs. They require planning and preparation to be done consistently and systematically on all students over a set period of time. To keep records of focused observations a teacher may wish to use:

- labels
- sticky notes
- index cards
- file folders

It is important to note that focused observations are meant to reflect what the student is doing.



Appendix A

Suggested Editing Symbols

Mark	What it does	Example
≡	capitalize	i walked to the store <u>i</u>
^	add something	I walked to ^{the} theater
↗	add a comma	After my nap, I walked to the theater.
↕	add quotation marks	Singing wildly, she said, "I walked to the theater."
∩	take something away	I walked to the theater. I walked on Friday.
SP	spell correctly	The <u>rinocerus</u> ^{SP} ambled along.
#	indent the paragraph	The trip was fun. I saw a man eating apple pie.
/	make a lowercase letter	I W alked to the Theater.
S	transpose	I prefer (ice cream/vanilla.)
C	combine	I saw some thing.
#	Make a space between words	I prefer chocolate icecream. [#]

Suggested Further Reading

- Manitoba Education and Training. *Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Grade 3 Standards*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training, School Programs Division, 1996.
- Manitoba Education and Training. *Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes and Grade 6 Standards*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training, School Programs Division, 1996.
- Manitoba Education and Training. *Kindergarten to Grade 4 English Language Arts: A Foundation for Implementation*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training, School Programs Division, 1998.
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- Gregory, Kathleen, Caren Cameron, Anne Davies. *Setting and Using Criteria*. Courtenay, British Columbia: Connections Publishing, 1997.
- Routman, Regie. *Writing Essentials: Raising Expectations and Results While Simplifying Teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005.
- Continua Learning Community. *Writing Frames*. Winnipeg, MB: Frontier School Division, 2008.

***This handbook was produced by the 2007/08
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