

## Developing writing capabilities: Teaching writing when you are not an English teacher

### REMIND STUDENTS THAT WRITING IS A PROCESS THAT HELPS US CLARIFY IDEAS.

- Inform students that writing is a way of learning and not an end in itself.
- Let them know that writing is complicated, messy and non-linear.
- Help students identify the writer's key activities: developing ideas, finding a focus and a thesis, composing a draft, getting feedback from others, revising the draft by expanding ideas, clarifying meaning and reorganising, editing and presenting the finished work to readers.

### EXPLAIN THAT WRITING IS HARD WORK.

- Share with your students your own struggle grappling with difficult topics.
- If students know that writing takes effort they won't be discouraged by their own pace or progress.

### GIVE STUDENTS OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK ABOUT THEIR WRITING.

- Students need to talk about papers in progress so that they can formulate their thoughts, generate ideas, and focus their topics.
- Take five or ten minutes of class time for students to read their writing to each other in small groups or pairs. It's important for students to hear what their peers have written (this could be about their essay plan, outlines, etc. and not their actual essay).

### ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO REVISE THEIR WORK.

- Provide formal steps for revision by asking students to submit first drafts of paper for your review or for peer critique.
- You can also give students an option of revising or resubmitting one assignment in the semester for a higher grade.

### EXPLAIN THESIS STATEMENT.

- A thesis statement makes an assertion about some issue.
- A common student problem is to write papers that present an overview of facts with no thesis statement.

### STRESS CLARITY AND SPECIFICITY

- The more abstract and difficult the topic, the more concrete the student's language should be.
- Inflated language and academic jargon camouflages rather than clarify their point.

### EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF GRAMMAR, SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT.

- Tell students that you will be looking at both the quality of writing and content.

### DISTRIBUTE RESOURCES ON GOOD WRITING PRACTICES.

### INFORM STUDENTS ABOUT THE AVAILABLE SUPPORT SERVICES.