



Author(s): <i>Doris M. Quick</i>			Lesson Title: <i>Writer's Idea Bank</i>			
Grade Span			ICLE Application Model			
<i>K-4</i>	<i>5-8</i>	<i>9-12</i> <i>X</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i> <i>X</i>	<i>D</i>

Instructional Focus:

Writing

Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences with sophistication and complexity appropriate to the grade level.

Performance Task

We know that students improve their writing if they write frequently in a variety of formats, to a variety of audiences, and for a variety of purposes. However, students frequently tell us they don't have anything to write about. This activity addresses the problem of students thinking they have no ideas and will convince them that everyone has stories to tell.

In writing folders or notebooks students label a blank sheet of paper "Writer's Idea Bank". Beneath this heading, students are asked to list at least 10 topics they know enough about to write about. To help generate ideas, you as teacher, model a list of 10 topics you could write about. Talk your way through it so students see how one idea can lead to another or how a general topic like "sports" can lead to several more specific ideas like "how to score in soccer", "how to attain fitness for sports", "how to explain football to a foreign student", etc. Most students will not be able to generate ten topics without additional help. After everyone appears to have two or three ideas, ask students to share one idea and talk about it briefly. Other students are asked to piggy-back off the ideas being discussed and add to their own lists.

When everyone has ten topics listed, ask students to underline the topic they would first like to write about. It may be the one they like the best or the one they know the most about. Students write that topic on a clean piece of paper and jot-list as many details as possible under that topic. Again, they may need help generating details. Ask students to talk their way through their chosen topic and have other members of the class ask questions. The questions should generate more details to add.

Next, ask students to free write a lead paragraph. During free writing, students write as quickly as they can just as words come to them. They should not be blocked or anxious at this point about spelling or mechanics. Just get the ideas down. Students read this first draft (sometimes called a sloppy copy) to a peer who asks questions as clues to what other details might be added. The writer is directed to add whatever seems appropriate. At this point, many students will be capable of drafting a first draft on their own. More mature writers can be asked to write a second lead paragraph different from the first, and in conversation with a peer discuss the merits of both leads and decide on how to approach the first or lead paragraph in the best way.

Students should be directed to their Idea Bank frequently throughout the year. The teacher can require that the student write fiction, poetry, exposition and persuasion and that the student write to a variety of audiences. Some of these pieces will proceed through the writing process of drafting, editing, revising, and publishing. The point of this activity, however, is just to get the writing started.

ICLE Essential Skills

Follow oral or written directions. (ela 4)

Develop processes for understanding and remembering information. (ela 8)

Present information in well-organized fashion that will be clear to the target audience. (ela11)

Draft a report that engages an audience and is concise, clear, well-organized, accurate, and informative. (ela12)

Scoring Guide:

No official “grade” is given for this activity. The student and teacher should be able to answer “yes” to the following questions:

1. Did the student follow the oral directions in completing his/her Idea Bank?
2. Did the student contribute during brain storming sessions?
3. Did the student offer helpful ideas to other students during brain storming sessions?
4. Did the student identify ten or more potential writing topics for his/her Idea Bank?
5. Did the student successfully complete a lead for one of his/her ideas?
6. Did the student successfully complete a first draft based on one of his/her ideas?

Keywords

English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
Reading	Algebra	Earth Science
Writing Composition Creative writing Draft Expository Narrative Outline Paragraphs Peer Review Prewrite	Geometry	Life Science
Communications	Statistics	Chemistry
Literature	Calculus	Physics
Other Writing Process	Trigonometry	Other
	Other	