



Collins Education Associates

The Collins Writing Program

A Writing Across the Curriculum Program with Over 35 Years of Proven Results

The Collins Writing Exchange

February 20, 2025 Issue #81



Why Collins Writing?

Because . . .

How do I know what I think until I see what I say? -E. M. Forster

Our recent newsletters have explored ways to use real, relevant, and relatable writing in all content areas. This is not a new concept. For decades, there has been an evidence-based trend towards using writing in every area of educational programming. Knowing that writing is not exclusively a skill for the ELA classroom is the **WHY** for our simple, effective, and efficient strategies. The need for cross-content literacy has inspired the tools, protocols, and methods that are the heart of the Collins Writing framework. And the experiences, research, and testimonials of authors, researchers, teachers, and students validates **Why** we do what we do.

This month, we are breaking from our usual format to focus on the abundant support for our routines and practices. Many consider us as a Learning to Write initiative (and that is **one** of our purposes) but, we are also an incredibly intuitive, efficient, and effective structure for using **Writing to Learn** in all content areas—from cooking to calculus!

We believe that effective schools do not separate the two. **WHY?** Because both Writing to Learn **and** Learning to Write are critical parts of a successful and enriching learning environment.

“Writing is a fundamental skill,” says Steve Graham of Arizona State University, “... to learn new ideas, persuade others, record information, create imaginary worlds, express feelings, entertain others, heal psychological wounds, chronicle experiences, and explore the meaning of events and situations ...” If schools are not teaching to write **AND** writing to learn, it “exacts a toll on those who do not learn to write well, as this can limit academic, occupational, and personal attainments,” says Graham.

This issue is devoted to sharing support for our strongly held beliefs about how to teach and use writing as a learning tool in any subject area--the **WHYS** of Collins Writing and **Writing to Learn**. Each link supplies research, authority, and observations for practitioners about **WHY** we do what we do.



The WHYS of Writing to Learn

WHY Write Across the Curriculum?

Because ... it builds critical thinking, improves content mastery, and prepares students for their future careers. See what the experts say...

WHY Use Quickwrites?

Because ... they facilitate productive brainstorming and improve content learning and retention. See what other experts say...

WHY Prioritize Essential Vocabulary?

Because ... vocabulary development is essential to making sense of classroom and real-world tasks, impacts all modes of literacy (reading, writing, and speaking), and is a key indicator of academic success. More from the experts...

Quickwrites in Action

Here's a great video showing quickwrites being used in actual *writing to learn* classes! The Collins framework, namely **Type One and Type Two Writing**, provides the language, structures, and routines teachers and students need to make writing to learn a success!



Quickwrites Across Grade Levels

Our website has an entire page dedicated just to the nuts and bolts of **Type One and Type Two** quickwrites, and sometimes seeing samples of student work really helps to clarify our method and inspire success.

Below are just a few Type One and Two samples across grade levels and content areas.

CEA Collins Writing Type One Sample

High School
What was one problem that was difficult in last night's homework? Explain what made it difficult. Fill at least 4 lines.

How long does it have to be? Line or item quota sets expectations for productivity.

Topic: 4 lines Josh

#18 $c^2 = a^2 + b^2 - 2ab \cos C$ is the problem I can't get. I don't understand why there aren't angles in the equation. But I guess that is because the law of cosines helps you find out missing angles and sides.

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CEA Collins Writing Type Two Sample

High School
Identify and explain two artistic techniques you used in your recent project.

A clear content quota makes scoring easy. This student scored 2 out of 2 possible points for correctly describing two art techniques used.

The "below the line" technique encourages students to add to their responses as the teacher provides feedback to the class. This student added three more techniques to their original answer during class discussion.

Type 2, two techniques: brushing and mixing colors. I used to make my project more appealing with a pen and ink and adding with a pencil. To make you make a number of dots spreading some out on various work up depending on what the work is supposed to be. The more dots you have in an area the darker the product is. If when using a pencil to do it all you do it more harder in the area which are supposed to be shadows and lighter where the light hits the object in the painting.

brushing in watercolor color

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So, to answer the initial question: Why Collins Writing?

Because experts have weighed in and determined that writing is always a best practice across grade levels, across the curriculum, and across time!

For even more from the experts and for Case Studies that demonstrate our success, visit [Why Choose Collins Writing](#).

We Want to Hear from YOU!

*If you have another **WHY?** as a result of your own work with the Collins Writing Program, please send it to Cheryl McDonough and receive a free resource!*

Stock Up on "Writing to Learn" Materials



Desktop Guides

Collins Writing "At-a-Glance"
(Gr. K-12)

The Retrieval Routine Bundle

Vocabulary Cards Desktop Guide

New Desktop Guides
Coming Soon

~ Using Writing in Math ~

~ Literacy in the CTE Classroom ~



Book PDFs

Writing Strategies for the Primary Grades

Writing Projects for the Elementary Grades

Developing an Effective Writing Program for the Elementary Grades

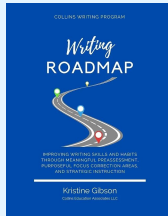
Save 25% on

Twelve Assignments Every Middle School Student Should Write

High School Writing Projects

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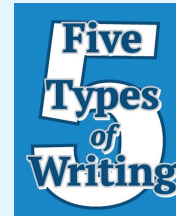
**How About PD in Your PJs?
Learning in Your Living Room?
Practice by the Pool?**



**Writing Roadmap:
Improving Writing Skills and
Habits Through Meaningful
Preassessment,
Purposeful FCAs, and Strategic
Instruction**

*Three one-hour, pre-recorded
video modules
Anytime, Asynchronous Access*

Instructor: Kristine Gibson



**Introduction to the Collins
Writing Program
An At-Your-Own-Pace
Introduction to the
Five Types of Writing**

*Six one-hour, pre-recorded
video modules
Anytime, Asynchronous Access*

Instructor: Dr. John Collins

Public Sessions Near You
(or in your living room!)



Hosted by the Morris-Union Jointure Commission

- Simple Strategies for Building Revising and Editing Skills, Grades 3-10 (2/26/25 Online--A few spots still available!)
- Making Mechanics Matter: Holding Students Accountable for Your Biggest Writing Pet Peeves, Grades 4-10 (2/26/25 Online--A few spots still available!)
- Managing and Improving Writing Skills and Habits in the Primary Grades, Grades K-2 (3/7/25 New Jersey)

And More Coming Attractions!



New PD Topics!

- *Portfolio and Project-Based Assessment Using the Five Types Framework*
- *Writing as a Tool for Test Prep*
- *Literacy in CTE Schools*
- *Using Literacy to Build Stamina*



*Have an idea for a training topic?
Send it to Cheryl McDonough*
and if we take your suggestion, we will send you a free print or PDF item of your choice from our online store!

and Confidence for WorkKeys

- *Aligning Your New Reading Program to Collins Writing*

Email Cheryl McDonough for more information.

We are adding **new sessions** all the time! Continue to check our **Public Courses** for updates.

Next Month: Using the Collins Framework for Learning to Write

Send your questions, challenges, or ideas to Cheryl McDonough. Those included in our next issue will receive a free Desktop Guide!

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Now**

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