**Pass It Down**

This cooperative-learning technique is great practice for a writing lesson. Students will be put in a group of 4 students per group. This will allow students to work on creating stories and writing in a given amount of time.

**How to Use**

1. Students will be placed in a group of four.
2. The teacher hand out a card with a writing prompt on it.
3. Each student in the group will have a piece of paper, and that student will get 2 minutes to write the introduction to the prompt.
4. The papers will be passed to the next student on the right and that student will continue on the next paragraph that follows what the other student wrote. This round will get 4 minutes to read and write on the paper.
5. This rotation will continue until the paper gets back to the original students that started with that paper.
6. Students will then be given time to read their paper and discuss with the group about what they wrote.

**When to Use**

This is a great strategy for ELAR students because they will have practice time to work on reading and writing. This will also help get students use to writing and responding to a prompt in a quick manner.

* This strategy could be used when working on writing STAAR prompts.
* It can be used as reading responses to classroom reading assignments.
* This strategy could be used to breakdown writing assignments by having students write different parts of a story/essay.
* This strategy could be used when practicing vocab words and applying those word into sentences.
* This strategy could be used to review different writing strategies.

**Variations**

**Pass it Down as a Class**

This could be modified by having each student in class write on the paper to add to the story. Each student could write a single sentence and then pass it to the next person. This would be a great exercise for students to work on writing different parts of an essay or story.

**Pass it Down Review**

Students will be given a writing prompt about a classroom story and students will get an opportunity to rewrite the writing. This can be used to review stories read in class as well as writing prompts to give students a chance to rewrite a certain paragraph.

**Pass it Down Vocab**

One student draws a vocab word and reads it to the other students. The other students will then use that word in a sentence. From that sentence the other students will then write one sentence and then pass it on to the next students. They will be finished once the paragraph is finished.

**Snowball**

This is a fun cooperative learning strategy that can be used in a few different ways. This is done by having a number of different writing prompts printed on small pieces of paper that will then be passed out to each student and then crumbled up. This strategy is a great way for students to get up and move while getting to pick an unknown prompt to work with.

**How to Use**

1. Each student will get a piece of paper with a writing prompt on it and crumble it up into a ball.
2. Students will then stand throw the balls around the classroom.
3. Students will pick up and continue throwing the balls until the teacher tells them to stop.
4. Students will then pick the closest ball and that will be the prompt they will write about.

**When to Use**

There are many different ways this strategy could be used.

* This could be used for different reading questions.
* This strategy could also be used for math problems.
* It could also be used to review vocab words by either putting the words on the paper or the definition and having students use them in a sentence.
* It could be used to assign groups for a project.
* It could also be used to assign different read assignments for students/groups.

**Variations**

**Snowball Reading**

This strategy could be used to help students pick reading questions from a class book. The teacher can print off the different reading questions and use this strategy for each student to receive a different question to write a response to. This would make sure that the student didn’t have a choice in the question that they had to respond to.

**Snowball Groups**

This strategy could also be used to assign students to different groups. For example, each piece of paper would have a number 1-4 and each student would get to throw a piece of paper around and then whatever number they picked up would be their group. This makes sure that the groups are random.

**Snowball Review**

This strategy could be used by putting review questions on the pieces of paper and having students throw the pieces and then answer the question on a piece of paper. Once the student is finished answer one question, they could throw the paper again and answer a different question. This would be a fun strategy for reviewing for a test or vocab.

**Badges**

This strategy is one that is a lot of fun for all students and is helpful when it comes to deciding on a topic for a writing prompt. This is used in ELAR classes but could be modified for other subjects. The materials needed are the badges worksheet provided by the teacher for the students.

**How to Use**

1. Students will be given a piece of paper with blank badges on them.
2. The students will then be given 15 minutes to fill in each badge, with a topic/subject that they know a lot about. For example, it could be family, sports, or animals.
3. Students will then decorate the different badges to represent those topics/subjects.
4. The teacher will then go over how to connect at least one topic/subject on each person’s sheet to a writing prompt they will have to do.
   1. This shows the students that no matter what the writing prompt is they have at least one badge that will connect to that prompt.

**When to Use**

This strategy can be used in different subject areas and used to connect writing and reading more easily for students.

* This strategy can be used in reading by having students fill out the different badges with ideas/topics from the current class book.
* It can also be used for students to relate their personal reading books to different writing topics.
* This strategy could also be used to help student relate different vocab words to their writing.
* Another way this strategy could be used is to pair/group up students based off of the topics they put in their badges.
* This strategy could be used to help students learn about their fellow classmates and even their teachers.

**Variations**

**Reading Badges**

Students would put main characters/events from their books on the badge sheet to help them answer reading questions later. This sheet could be kept with the students to help them keep track of the characters and different events.

**Badge up Pair Up**

This strategy could be used to show students that just because two students have the same topic on their badge sheet it doesn’t mean the exact same thing to both students. For example, two students put family on their sheets but the reasons for choosing their families could be different.

**Icebreaker Badges**

This strategy would be fun during the first few weeks of school to help students get to know their teachers and their fellow classmates. Students could fill out and decorate their badges then explain to the teacher/class why that topic is important to them. This will help everyone know what is important to each other. For example, if two students love to read Harry Potter books then they could pair up for a writing assignment to explain which book is the best and why.

**Writing with the Stars**

This strategy is great for students to get more feedback from both their peers and the teacher on their writing. Each student will read to the class a piece of their writing and the class will rate that student 1-4 and will have to justify that rating. Students must give a glow (positive feedback) and a grow (what could be improved).

**How to Use**

1. Students will have a piece of their own writing. This could be a poem, essay, reading response, or short story.
2. The students will then take turns reading their writing to the class or small group.
3. The other students not reading will then rate the writing 1—4 based off of the writing rubric assigned.
4. Students will then justify their rating and give a glow and a grow to that student about their writing.

**When to Use**

This strategy can be used in several different ways to help students grow in their writing.

* This strategy can be used when students are writing essays and need feedback for new ideas to put into their writing.
* It could also be used when students are stuck in their writing and need feedback from peers or teachers.
* This strategy can be used on smaller writing assignments like poems/journal responses.
* It can also be used to help students get more comfortable with speaking in front of the class.
* This strategy can be used when responding to short answer questions in other subjects such as math and reading as well.

**Variations**

**Writing with the Stars Review**

This strategy could be used on short answer test questions by allowing students to get feedback on their responses from their peers. This would show students that writing with proper grammar and spelling is important even with short answer responses.

**Writing with the Stars Small Groups**

This variation allows for students to share their writing in smaller groups instead of in front of the entire class. This will help students get more direct feedback from peers because everyone in the group will be able to give a grow and glow on the essay.

**Writing with the Stars Math Game**

Students would great math word problems for the other members in their group to solve. This will help students with their writing skills in other subject areas, while still receiving feedback from their peers on their writing.

**Vocabulary Charades**

This learning strategy is great for reviewing vocabulary words while still getting an opportunity to move around. Students will have to have their groups figure out what they are trying to act out and then whoever guesses the word correctly has to use that word in a sentence and give the definition.

**How to Use**

1. Students will be broken up into groups of four students per group.
2. The students will then be given a bag full of vocab cards to act out.
3. Each student will get 1 minute to try and gesture the word to their group members.
4. If the students guess the word correctly, they must write it in a sentence and give the definition for extra points.
5. Team with the most points wins.

**When to Use**

This strategy is great to use when needing to review vocab words before a big test.

* This could be used to review over characters or events from current readings in the class.
* Students could act out different reading response questions to their group. If the group guess the question, then they get to respond to that question for extra credit.
* This strategy could also be used by the class as a whole. A group will come up in front of the class to act out the word and have the class guess what the word is.
* This could also be used to help students act out different sections of a story they are not understanding from the reading.

**Variations**

**Character Charades**

Students would modify this strategy to focus on characters from previous readings. The students would pick a character from the reading and act it out. If the students guess the character correctly, they have to write down the character’s name and three characteristics about that character that stick out.

**Vocabulary Pictionary**

Students would draw their vocab word out for their group to guess. Once the group guesses the word, they will then write down the definition and use it in a sentence.

**Classmate Charades**

This could be a fun icebreaker strategy for students by acting out one of their classmates. The student that guesses the correct classmate will be able to go next.

**Heads Up Vocab**

This strategy is a great way for students to explain the different vocab words without actually saying the word. This strategy would require the vocab words to be on a small piece of paper and students put into small groups.

**How to Use**

1. Students will be placed into groups of 3-4 per group.
2. There will be a deck of vocab words in the center of the table face down.
3. The first student will pick up the vocab word without looking at it and place it on their forehead for their group to see.
4. The group will then try to have the student guess the word by giving them clues about the word.
   1. STUDENTS CAN NOT SAY THE WORD OR THE POINTS DO NOT COUNT
5. Group with the most points will win.

**When to Use**

This strategy is great to use when needing to review vocab words and what other words can be used to explain that word.

* This strategy can be used when review characters from current reading in class.
* It can also be used to review different events from books both in and out of class.
* It could be a fun icebreaker for the first few weeks of class by having the cards be popular movies and shows.
* This strategy could be modified to help students review math terms/formulas.
* It could also be used to review different sentence structures.

**Variation**

**Heads Up Icebreaker**

This strategy could be modified to use during the beginning of classes to help students have some fun with their new classmates. The teacher would create cards with different characters from popular movies/books. This is a fun game to help students gain more practice in explain different topics.

**Heads Up Characters**

This strategy would be a great review at the end of a book the class read together by reviewing over different characters. The students would have to use the different events that character was in to help the student guess which character it is.

**Heads Up Math**

This strategy could be modified to help review over different math or science terms/formulas. The students would have to explain the term or what the formula is used for in order for that student to correctly guess the term/formula.