Powerful action steps

Front the writing:

Using 'Front the Writing' in your lesson plans

- **Use the following formula:** 1) students write initial ideas about a question or prompt; 2) students feedback on their ideas 3) Teacher and students "**chart**" the feedback (in student work, on the board or both); 4) students re-write or "**stamp**" their new ideas following the discussion.

Writing Initial ideas

- Ensure that the prompt that you give students to write from initially is simple enough so that that they can begin to write straight away. Avoid complex vocabulary that they have not learnt, or including too many new ideas at once. Ensure that the wording is clear.
- Before initial writing, use quick fire recall questioning or a mini-quiz to activate content that students need to think. There is no point having them write or think about something they know nothing about.
- If students struggle to begin writing, provide a short sentence starter to frame their thinking and writing, for example: *Despite coming across as an evil character,…*
- When introducing a 'front the writing' episode, use language to emphasise that it is not perfection or correctness but simply their best ideas and thoughts that you care about: *"This is our starting point. We'll build our learning based on what we all get down."*
- When introducing a front the writing episode, use language to emphasise that you really care about the work of your students: *"I'm looking forward to hearing some of our great ideas."*
- When students begin their writing, use positive praise to encourage making maximum use of time: *"loving the quick pen to paper."*

Feedback

- When students are completing their first write, you are **hunting, not fishing**. In other words, reading their writing, looking for the best bits to share. Choose based on ideas that you want all students to learn from.
- When students are completing their first write, you are **hunting, not fishing**. Choose based on a common error that many students have made that you want to correct.
- When students are completing their first write, you are **hunting, not fishing**. Choose based on an excellent piece of work that sets a standard for other students to meet.
- When you are taking feedback, use language to take the pressure off students who read out their work. Simply saying: "what did you write?" makes it a lot easier for students to start. Alternately, use language to make sharing seem casual and relaxed: *"Jason, what have you and Kim been kicking around?"*
- When you are taking feedback, use language to praise bravery for starting a discussion: *"Jason is going to be be a hero and kick us off first with his idea on…"*
- When you are taking feedback, use language to show that you really value student contributions: *"when I was reading work, I saw a really good example of _____ in Jason's work so I wanted to show it to you."*
- As you take feedback, move away from the student who is talking and out into the room to encourage listening from all students.
- As you take feedback, adapt an exaggerated "pose of interest" to model active, engaged listening. For example, cock your head and stroke your (invisible) beard.

"Charting": take careful notes of student contributions and encourage students to do the same

- As you take feedback, note down the best ideas on the board for students to use later. This is called "charting" their ideas. Write this as clearly as possible: students are going to refer to this later!
- As you take feedback, hold students accountable for taking careful notes of what their peers say It can help to number or divide this space, for example 1-3 so that students know they must get down three new ideas.
- As you take feedback, increase think ratio by structuring their notes page so that they have to carefully consider where to place their notes. For example, divide this into 'ideas that **support** my response and 'ideas that **contrast** with my response'.

The "Stamp": students re-write based on the feedback

- When students complete their final write (their stamp), use language to highlight the importance of making this a really well-crafted piece based on the whole class feedback: "let's make this a beautiful, beautiful stamp."

- When students complete their final write (their stamp), use language to highlight the importance of using the ideas of their classmates: *"We are going to improve our work based on what we just talked about. You need to use at least three ideas that you heard to make your writing even better."*
- When students complete their final write (their stamp), use language to highlight the importance of using the ideas of their classmates: *"Tick off parts of your notes as you use them. Try to include everything you noted down."*
- Make sure you praise students that you can see making careful changes to their work and including the ideas of their classmates: *"I can see that Jason has already added three of the ideas that we discussed. I wonder if you can get all five?"*

Show Call:

Sharing student work:

- When using show call to display student work ensure that all students are able to read or view the work: use either a document camera or an app like Twitter or Evernote to display the work blown up on the board.
- When you display student work, use language to create a culture that having your work displayed is an honour and something to aspire to: *"Look at this beautiful piece of work. Boom. Look how they've…"*

"The Take" and "The Reveal"

- When you take student work, it is vital that a positive culture is built around this. Use language to show that you value this: *"I want to show off a great piece of work."*
- When you take student work, it is vital that a positive culture is built around this. Quietly ask the student if this is ok: *"I'd love to show off your work to the class. Thanks."*
- When you take student work, it is vital that a positive culture is built around this. If you are going to take work without speaking, use a positive non-verbal to show that you value this, for example a smile and thumbs up.
- If you are going to take work, lead with honest praise of the work (and a merit.): *"I'd like to start us off by drawing your attention to the brilliant way that…"*
- If you are going to point out a mistake in a piece of work, use the language of improvement to demonstrate that this is a positive thing: *"I saw a mistake here that I know lots of us are making, so let's all figure out how to improve…."*
- If you are going to point out a mistake in a piece of work, use the language of improvement to make this a positive thing: "*This is already a great piece of work; let's make it even better."*

Analysing student work

- Before analysing student work, make sure you read this as a class. This is especially important if this is a large chunk of writing.
- Get students to do the work when analysing. Ask them to identify strengths: *"What's strong about this piece of work?"*
- Get students to do the work when analysing. Ask them to identify areas for development: *"There's a common error in this sentence. What is it?"*
- If you are asking students to spot strengths and weaknesses in a piece of work, give them some time to discuss this in a pair: *"There is one mistake in this sentence that I'd like us to spot. Talk to your partner."*
- If students are not able to spot what you want them to from a piece of work, stand at the board and explain this to them. Don't be afraid to use your subject expertise to discuss a piece of work: *"So, there were three things that I want to draw your attention to in this piece of work…"*
- As you pull out strengths and weaknesses from a piece of work, note these down on the board and/or have students make notes. They will use these to improve their own work later on.
- Show two pieces of work at once and have students compare for quality: ask students to vote (hands up?) on which on they think is correct: *"Hmm. Which of these is right?........Hands up for piece 1. Hands up for piece 2."*
- If students vote on which piece of work is correct, don't immediately give the answer ("*Yes, number two is correct*."). Instead, ask the students to justify their choices: "*Jason, you said that number one was correct. Why?"*
- Following your analysis, make sure you let students apply their learning by re-writing a new piece of editing their original piece of work: *"If you didn't do X, Y or Z you have one minute to edit your work…"*