

Sub theme:

Empowering teachers to teach literature

Students don't write, right?

by Shamali Jayarathne and Anya Shaw

Abstract

In 'Students don't write, right?' Shamali Jayarathne and Anya Shaw focus on how motivating students to write can be a challenge. Topics might not be relevant or interesting, tasks can be very traditional, writing can lead to a static classroom dynamic, tasks might not be authentic or give students a reason to write, and different groups and individuals may need help with different areas to develop their writing.

So, what can be done? How can teachers help students develop their writing skills with tasks that enthuse and how can teacher educators support teachers in this endeavour? In this paper the authors present a true story, a success story of how one stressed out teacher's question in the teachers' room ended up motivating an entire school to write. The key was micro-writings, or small, bite-sized writing tasks. These can play a key role in helping students to learn to write and develop writing subskills. Micro-writing tasks can also be tailored to the needs of any class. Alongside this, a writing competition was born and the response from students was unprecedented.

Taking ideas from the process, product and genre approaches to writing, in this paper the authors look at how writing competitions and public display can help boost students' motivation to write and develop vital writing subskills.