The Writer’s Logbook

Helping students to become better writer in English as a second language



Project based on the following documents:

Profil de Scripteur (Louise-Isabelle Couture, 1999)

Guide d’aide à l’implantation et à l’organisation de la démarche Profil de Scripteur dans une école (Louise-Isabelle Couture, Christian Tavernier et Lynda Côté, CS des Affluents, Services des ressources éducatives, 2010)

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**Introduction**

The tools that are presented here are based on a document produced by Louise-Isabelle Couture, Christian Tavernier and Lynda Côté from the school board des Affluents (Services des ressources éducatives) called Guide d’aide à l’implantation et à l’organisation de la démarche Profil de Scripteur dans une école (2010) which in turn is based on another document called Profil de Scripteur, produced by Louise-Isabelle Couture (1999), a vice-principal with the same school board. This process was implemented at the Commission scolaire des Affluents, in French classes. Mrs. Couture came to our school board (Commission scolaire de La Jonquière) to present her work to French teachers and pedagogical consultants. The author of the guide, Mrs Lynda Côté was asked for permission to translate and adapt the material in order to be used by teachers of English as a second language at the CSDLJ, and such permission was granted in January 2011.

The Profil de Scripteur is a tool to encourage students to reflect on their writing skills by recording and analyzing their mistakes in a structured manner. This tool is a kind of log book used by students mainly, but that can also be used by teachers when it comes time to evaluate students’ efforts and progress and also, to prepare remedial classes according to the needs of the students. The first objective is to help students become more autonomous when self-correcting their written work. The second objective is to help students lower the amount of mistakes in their written productions by making sure they understand those mistakes and how to correct them.

The Profil de Scripteur is part of a teaching technique called Strategic teaching and has its roots in 6 basic principles of teaching/learning:

1- The student is the first person responsible of his/her learning;

2- Learning is better achieved if the learner is aware of his/her difficulties;

3- Learning is better achieved if the learner is aware of his/her progress;

4- Learning through many hands-on activities is the best way for teachers to help students participate in the construction of their own knowledge;

5- The learning and teaching of writing skills must be spread out throughout many years;

6-The best way for teachers to accompany students in the development of their writing skills is to use a dynamic approach to manage and support them.

Although this tool was originally designed for French as a mother tongue classes, it seems to be equally valuable and helpful for students of English as a second language to use such a tool when doing written productions.

**Why use a Writer’s Logbook?**

The Writer’s Logbook is based on the Profil de Scripteur that French teachers are already implementing in our school board at the secondary level. Therefore, this tool will not be new to students and they will be able to reinvest what they are doing in French.

The main objective is to help our students become better writer when it comes time to do a written production. By using a tool that will help students reflect on their writing skills and to enable them to pinpoint the problem areas, the writing process could become a learning experience and we could hope to see a progression in the students’ writing abilities.

In order to relate this tool with the PFEQ, it is helpful to know that the rules and mechanics of the English language is part of the related content and therefore must be taught. In the Progression of learning document produced by the MELS (2010), you will find a sub-section called Language Conventions, in the Language Repertoire section of the related content, where Grammar is divided into two categories: grammatical structures (parts of speech, sentence constructions, word forms and agreement) and mechanics (capitalization, punctuation and spelling). The grammatical structures must be taught in Elementary as well as throughout the Secondary level with the teacher’s guidance. Students are expected to apply this knowledge only at the end of their last year of secondary (sec 5). Writing is also a process which has a phase called editing, in which the students must correct grammar errors to improve their draft. This self-correction must be taught in Elementary, in secondary one, two, and three and students should be able to apply it by the end of secondary four. In secondary five, students are expected to reinvest this skill (Progression of Learning, MELS, 2010).

**What is the Writer’s Logbook?**

**For the student, it’s a tool**

* Based on the construction of learning: the student becomes aware of the level of his/her writing skills;
* Based on socio-constructivism: peers are part of the reflection and analysis process;
* To personalize self-reflection on writing abilities;
* To differentiate: it will be used as a motivation tool first;
* To help the student focus on realistic goals to correct his/her mistakes.

**For the teacher, it’s a tool**

* That allows teachers to use socio-constructivism, by giving students tools to build their knowledge;
* That allows teachers to differentiate, by varying, for example, their teaching and learning strategies.

**Goals of the Writer’s Logbook**

1. To enable students to recognize, name and explain their mistakes and to correct them;

2. To lower the number of grammar mistakes in students’ written production.

**What do you have to put in place before you use it?**

A- Introduce the different elements of a self-correction guide in the first few months of the year:

B- Demonstrate how to use self-correction with guided practice

Students must develop the habit of verifying their own written work before giving it to the teacher. They must learn how to use it first with guided practice and then become autonomous.

C- Introduce the Writing Errors Guide

This tool should be presented to students and they should each have a copy in order to be able to understand their corrected written production. It will also help them when time comes to complete their correction process.

D- Use the Writer’s logbook

This tool should be the last one presented to students and introduced as a way of recording their progress. It should be seen as a tool to identify areas where they need to improve but also areas where improvements were made.

**What material do students need?**

The students need:

- 1 binder or duo-tang with pockets

- 1 Canada exercise book

- Glue or tape (to put the different guides on the interior cover of their Canada exercise book)

- 2 or 3 transparent sheet protectors

All the different documents should be kept together in a binder or a duo-tang. The Writer’s Logbook should be done in a Canada exercise book. The self-correction guide should be in a transparent sheet protector as well as the reminder for written production sheet.

**How do you introduce the Writer’s Logbook to students?**

Before: make sure students are familiar with the self-correction guide.

**Class 1**

* Introduction of the concept of learning from your mistakes;
* Presentation of tools and setting up the material (filling the Canada exercise book with the proper tools, putting the reference material in the transparent sheet protector);
* Using guided practice, teacher demonstrates how the tools work with various examples.

Introduction to the concept of learning from your mistakes using 5 questions:

1- **What** does it mean to learn from our mistakes?

2- **Why** should you use your mistakes to learn?

3- **When** do you start working with your mistakes?

4- **How** do we learn from our mistakes?

5- **What** are the benefits of using the Writer’s Logbook?

Note: the teacher can use an analogy on the importance of learning from our mistakes in order to be able to grow as a human being. When we are young, we learn that certain behaviors or attitudes are better than others and we choose to develop those behaviors and attitudes in order to evolve and become better at what we do and at who we are. It’s part of growing up and developing our personal skills. It’s the same with developing our writing skills: we learn through our mistakes by being able to identify them and understand why they are mistakes. Then we learn how to correct them and therefore evolve in our writing competency.

Explain other advantages of using the Writer’s Logbook:

It’s a way to improve their writing skills;

It’s part of the program (PFEQ) in the Language conventions section as well as in the writing process section;

The written productions are going to be shorter but more frequent.

Present the different tools to the students:

* Writing Errors Guide
* My correction process
* How to use the correction process
* Summary of mistakes
* Reminder for written production
* How to use the reminder for written production

**Class 2**

Experimentation: Ask students to write 2 or 3 sentences on a specific subject and encourage them to use the self-correction guide before giving it back to the teacher. Teacher corrects the written production by using the Writing Errors Guide: the mistakes are indicated on the students’ sheets by using the appropriate code in the margin or on top of parts that are wrong, but they are not corrected.

**Class 3**

Students receive feedback on their written production: they now have to begin their correction process using their tools and to record it in their Writer’s Logbook (Canada exercise book), following the steps on the sheet called How to use the correction process (which should be glued on the interior back cover of their Canada exercise book).

Step-1 My mistake: Write the group of words or sentence in which you made a mistake.

Step-2 Type of error: Identify which type of error it is, based on the Writing Errors Guide.

Step-3 Why is it a mistake? Using a dictionary, your notes or a grammar book, explain your mistake by writing the rule or the reference concerning it.

Step-4 My correction: Rewrite the corrected word or sentence.

After this is done, students record the number of mistakes they have done on the sheet called Summary of mistakes. After they have done this for 3 written productions, they compile and compare their results in order to be able to come up with a reminder (see the Reminder for written productions sheet) that will help them self-correct for the more official written production. However it should be noted that this last tool, Reminder for written productions, is not allowed for the MELS exams, but can be used throughout the year.

**How often should written production be done and corrected by the teacher?**

Approximately twice a month\*: every one class out of eight classes (for a 4 periods/9 days cycle) should be devoted to do a short written production. After 3 productions the students should do a summary of their correction on the Summary of mistakes sheet. With this summary the student can then fill the Reminder for written production sheet before doing a more official written production which should be done every second month.

Example of planning written productions for a year:

1 short production September week 2

1 short production September week 4

Please note:

You will find in the annex a list of suggestions of texts to write for your students. Each suggestion contains functional language that can be taught or reviewed before the written production.

1 short production October week 2

**1 official production end of October**

1 short production November week 2

1 short production November week 4

1 short production December week 2

**1 official production end of December**

1 short production January week 2

1 short production January week 4

1 short production February week 2

**1 official production end of February**

1 short production March week 2

1 short production March week 4

1 short production April week 2

**1 official production end of April**

1 short production May week 2

**1 official MELS/school board production June week 1**

\*this is a suggestion only – time and frequency must be adjusted according to teacher’s needs and availability.

**Other advantages of using the Writer’s Logbook**

The Writer’s Logbook can be used as a portfolio to keep written productions and to see the improvements as the year progresses;

The Writer’s Logbook can be used at parents’ meeting to show the work that has been done by students;

The Writer’s Logbook helps students to keep track of their own progress and areas where efforts should be made;

The Writer’s Logbook helps teachers to plan remedial classes based on areas where a student or a group of students need more help;

The Writer’s Logbook is already used by many French teachers therefore students will increasingly develop these strategies and reinvest them in other areas of their studies.

ANNEX

**Learning from our mistakes**

**What does it mean to learn from our mistakes?**

* It is to use our mistakes in order to think about our writing process and to learn something.

**Learning from our mistakes**

***Why* use mistakes to learn?**

* Mistakes give us information on our knowledge and the strategies that we use.
* When realizing ***why*** I made a mistake, I can understand better and not do the same mistake again.

**Learning from our mistakes**

***When* do you start working with your mistakes?**

* When your teacher gives you back a **corrected** written production.

**Learning from our mistakes**

***How* do we learn from our mistakes?**

* By using a process called

the *Writer’s Logbook.*

**The Writer’s Logbook allows me:**

* **To recognize, explain and correct my mistakes;**
* **To understand what my difficulties are;**
* **To see my progress;**
* **To make less mistakes;**
* **To establish some goals;**
* **To be more motivated.**

**Self-correction guide**

|  |
| --- |
| 1- Look at the sentences |
| * Check if sentences make sense. * Check punctuation and capital letters. |
| 2-Look at the structure of the sentences |
| What type of sentence is it?   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Question word** |  | **Subject** | **Auxiliary** | **Verb** | **Object**  (Rest of the sentence) | | **Affirmative** |  |  | S |  | V | O | | **Negative**  **(to be)** |  |  | S |  | V + not | O | | **Negative** |  |  | S | A + not | V | O | | **Question**  **(to be)** |  | V | S |  |  | O? | | **Question**  **(yes/no)** |  | A | S |  | V | O? | | **Question**  **(info)** | QW | A | S |  | V | O? | |
| 3- Check your words and verbs |
| Nouns :   * Check plural words   Pronouns :   * Check your choice of pronoun * Subject pronoun (before the verb) 🡺 **She** talks to him. * Object pronoun (after the verb) 🡺 She talks to **him**.   Verbs :   * Check verb tenses * Check for 3 p. s. (ex : he sing**s**) * Check for tense shift   Words :   * Check the spelling of your words * Check if your choice of word is appropriate. * Check if you used the correct form of the words you are using. |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Sentence Structure** | **Example** | **Correction** |
| SS 1 | Word order | He drives a car small. | He drives a small car. |
| SS 2 | Punctuation/  Capitalization | She screamed its friday | She screamed: “It’s Friday!” |
| SS 3 | Conjunction | I ate a cookie for I was hungry. | I ate a cookie because I was hungry. |
| SS 4 | Transition words | Next to, he already had finished. | Besides, he already had finished. |

**WRITING ERRORS GUIDE**

**Secondary Level**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Verb** | **Example** | **Correction** |
| V 1 | Subject-verb agreement | She drink coffee a lot. | She drinks coffee a lot. |
| V 2 | Verb tense | Yesterday we come to school. | Yesterday we came to school. |
| V 3 | Tense shift | On Monday we baked a cake and eat it. | On Monday we baked a cake and ate it. |
| V 4 | Phrasal verb | I have to care my sister. | I have to care for my sister. |

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| **Code** | **Word** | **Example** | **Correction** |
| W 1 | Plural form | You have six blues hats. | You have six blue hats. |
| W 2 | Word choice | He is listening to TV. | He is watching TV. |
| W 3 | Word form | He gives the book to my. | He gives the book to me. |
| W 4 | Spelling | I tougth I had more money. | I thought I had more money. |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Other** | **Example** | **Correction** |
| O 1 | Missing word | Where he live? | Where does he live? |
| O 2 | Too many words | I am go to the shopping center. | I go to the shopping center. |
| O 3 | Translation | Cup you (tasse toi). | Move over. |
| O 4 | French word | I assisted the conference. | I attended the conference. |

**How to use the correction process**

Step-1 **My mistake:**

Write the group of words or sentence in which you made a mistake.

Step-2 **Type of error:**

Identify which type of error it is, based on the Writing Errors Guide.

Step-3 **Why is it a mistake?**

Using a dictionary, your notes or a grammar book, explain your mistake by writing the rule or the reference concerning it.

Step-4 **My correction:**

Rewrite the corrected word or sentence.

**ORDER OF TRANSCRIPTION**

1. Fill in your correction process sheet.

2. Fill in your Summary of mistakes sheet.

3. Calculate your mistakes according to each category.

4. Identify the category in which you have the most mistakes.

5. Compile and compare your results after 3 written productions.

**My Correction process**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Step 1*** | ***Step 2*** | ***Step 3*** | ***Step 4*** |
| ***Date*** | ***My mistake*** | ***Type of error***  **(code)** | ***Why is it a mistake?***  **(write the rule or reference)** | ***My correction*** |
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**Summary of mistakes**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **SS1 : Word order**  **SS2: Punctuation/Capitalization**  **SS3: Conjunction**  **SS4: Transition words** | **V1 : Subject-verb agreement**  **V2 : Verb tense**  **V3 : Tense shift**  **V4 : Phrasal verb** | **W1: Plural form**  **W2: Word choice**  **W3: Word form**  **W4: Spelling** | **O1: Missing word**  **O2: Too many words**  **O3: Translation**  **O4: French word** |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Written text** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **Summary** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **Summary** | **7** | **8** | **9** | **Summary** |
| **Title** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Date** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Number of words** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Evaluation (result)** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Codes** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **SS** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **V** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **W** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **O** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Category of most frequent mistakes** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

How to use the

**REMINDER FOR WRITTEN PRODUCTIONS**

1. **Step 1: Collecting information**

* The student collects information in his Writer’s Logbook.
* The student adds up all the mistakes coming from the same category and writes the total in the summary column on the Summary of mistakes sheet.
* The student chooses 3 categories in which he/she has the most mistakes.
* The student prioritizes the correction of those mistakes when revising his draft copy.

2. **Step 2: Filling the “Reminder for written productions sheet”**

a. Priorities when correcting

* In this section of the sheet, the student writes the three (3) categories of mistakes that he chose earlier.
* Then, for each category, he writes the number of mistakes in total.
* He writes the name of tools where he can get the information to make sure that he can correct quickly and efficiently.
* He finally writes about a strategy to do when writing the draft so that he remembers to pay attention when correcting it.

b. Time management

In the time management section (when writing), the students organizes his/her time according to the steps he has to take when writing.

In the time management section (when autocorrecting), the student sets aside time for the correction of specific mistakes that he already selected in the mistake summary section.

**IMPORTANT**

**The REMINDER FOR WRITTEN PRODUCTIONS sheet is a tool that the student can use when doing a written production throughout the school year. However this tool cannot be used when writing the MELS exams; it is not allowed in the authorized materials.**

**REMINDER FOR WRITTEN PRODUCTIONS**

**MODEL**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Priorities when correcting | | | | |
| Summary of mistakes | Number of mistakes | Tools | | What to do |
| Subject-verb agreement  (3rd pers. sing = s ) | 18 | Grammar notes on present tense | | Underline pronouns, names of people, of things,etc. |
| Word order  (adjective before the noun) | 15 | Notes on word order (chart) | | Read text and check for adjectives (circle them) |
| Spelling | 11 | Dictionary | | Put a star over the word |
| Time management | | | | |
| When writing  Time Steps to take  15 minutes to read the task and prepare a plan  30 minutes to write a draft copy  **45 minutes to correct the draft**  20 minutes to copy the draft in the final copy booklet  10 minutes to read over the final copy one last time  120 minutes | | | When self-correcting  **Time** **Types of errors**  15 minutes for: Subject-verb agreement    15 minutes for: Word order    15 minutes for: Spelling | |

**REMINDER FOR WRITTEN PRODUCTIONS**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Priorities when correcting | | | | |
| Summary of mistakes | Number of mistakes | Tools | | What to do |
| 1- |  |  | |  |
| 2- |  |  | |  |
| 3- |  |  | |  |
| Time management | | | | |
| When writing  Time Steps to take  15 minutes to read the task and prepare a plan  30 minutes to write a draft copy  **45 minutes to correct the draft**  20 minutes to copy the draft in the final copy booklet  10 minutes to read over the final copy one last time  120 minutes | | | When self-correcting  **Time** **Types of errors**  15 minutes for: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    15 minutes for: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_    15 minutes for: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |

**SUGGESTION OF TEXTS**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Number** | **Title** | **Length** | **Functional language** |
| 1 | Description of your house/apartment | 5 sentences | * Articles * There is/are * Pronouns * Plural forms * Articles * Adjectives * Adverbs |
| 2 | Description of yourself and family members/friends | 5 sentences | * Articles * Present tense (3 p.s.) * Pers. pronouns * Poss. pronouns * To be/ to have * Possessives (‘s) |
| 3 | Your likes and dislikes | 5 sentences | * Present tense * Present progressive * Negatives |
| 4 | Talking about past event/experiences | 5 sentences | * Past tense * Past progressive |
| 5 | Projects/Predictions for the future | 5 sentences | * Future (will) * Future (going to) |
| 6 | What happened when…? | 10 sentences | * Simple past/past progressive * Phrasal verbs |
| 7 | Survey/Interviews | 10 sentences | * Questions |
| 8 | Recommendation/rules | 10 sentences | * Modals |
| 9 | Selling/Persuading | 10 sentences | * Comparatives/Superlatives * Present tense |
| 10 | Letter writing | 10 sentences | * Transition words * Connecting words * Capitalization * Punctuation * Preposition |