**Engaging Students in a Collaborative Writing Activity**

**Objectives**

Teachers will experience a collaborative writing activity as a model of a motivating small group instructional strategy that they can use with students in their own classrooms.

**Guiding Questions**

How can we leverage students’ desire for community to engage them in working together to improve their writing skills?

**At a Glance**

This session begins with a short discussion about the benefits of a group writing activity, asking teachers to share any previous experience in using group writing with students. It guides teachers in how to conduct this activity with students, giving steps to prepare the class in advance by modeling and sharing specific guidance for how to work as a group. Teachers then experience the activity for themselves, dividing into groups of about 5 to write a paragraph collaboratively about a Langston Hughes poem. They then debrief the experience as a large group, and have time for individual reflection at the end of the session.

**Facilitator’s Notes**

It is important to have materials for teachers to use in this exercise prepared and well-organized for distribution during the session. Instructions and materials are posted on the website and listed below.

Because of copyright issues, we give the link to obtain graphic organizers for this activity rather than posting a copy with these materials:

<https://www.google.com/search?q=blt+paragraph+sandwich&tbm=isch>

Using 3x5 post-it notes for writing each sentence works well. Here is a link for obtaining these:

<https://www.amazon.com/Post-Notes-Jaipur-Collection-655-5UC/dp/B00006JNNH/>

**Materials**

Paper and pens for each table

3x5 colored post-it notes (for sentences)

Copies of each of the following (one for each participant):

“Sandwich” graphic organizer (see link above to obtain one for use)

Group writing assignment sheet with Hughes poem

Directions for Collaborative Writing Exercise

Role cards

Handouts:

Teacher Modeling Suggestions for Group Writing

Teacher Personal Reflection form

**Procedure**

Have teachers sit at tables of 4-5 for small group discussion during the session.

**Introduction (7 minutes)**

Facilitator sets context by introducing guiding question and sub-questions (Slides 2-3).

**Small Group Writing Exercise (25-30 minutes)**

Emphasize to teachers that this segment is designed to allow them to experience and debrief an activity they can use with their students in their own classrooms. With teachers in groups of 4-5, pass out directions for the exercise, emphasizing that each group member has a role (as would occur in classroom group activities). The directions specify how each person plays his/her role in the process of writing a paragraph. Teachers follow instructions to collaboratively write their paragraph (one at each table of teachers).

**Large Group Discussion (10 minutes)**

Teachers reflect together about the activity and how they may need to change/adapt it to work in their classrooms (Slide 9).

**Teacher Reflection (5 minutes)**

Teachers reflect individually about how they might use this idea in their own classrooms, using personal reflection form.