2. Timed Repeated Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 min</th>
<th>One recording sheet per student</th>
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<td>Fluency, automaticity, reduced hesitation.</td>
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**What is it?**
A timed, free writing activity that begins with a prompt.

Its primary objective is to increase student productivity by ameliorating poor writing habits like self-editing while composing the first draft. The quality and quantity of writing is not assessed.

Running this activity on a weekly basis (twice weekly is better) does not require much time. Each session takes about 10 minutes. The first time it is introduced to the class takes longer because you need to explain the task, underscore the rationale and secure student buy-in.

**Set Up**
Hand out a recording sheet to each student when the activity is first introduced. Students should safeguard the sheet until the end of the term.

**Flow**
1. Write a word or phrase on the board. This is the writing prompt. Typically, the prompt is related to a topic or content recently covered in class.
2. Teacher instructions: “Write as much as you can, as well as you can, in 60 seconds on a topic related to the prompt.”
3. Start the count down; students begin writing.
4. Call time after one minute.
5. Students stop writing and count the number of written words. This number is written down on the recording sheet.
6. Students scan and circle errors in their text.
7. Repeat the 60-second writing exercise with the same prompt two more times.

**Benefits for the Teacher**
Over a semester, the students will produce a body of work that can be used by the teacher to gain insight into individual progress. Indicators of progress include the number of written words per minute (wpm). Additionally, teachers can compile a list of universal errors which could inform future lessons by targeting specific needs.

**Resource**
If you have access to a classroom computer with internet and a projection screen, an on-line timer adds a bit of zip to this exercise.

Try one these timers:
- www.timerland.net
- www.online-stopwatch.com/bomb-countdown/full-screen/
## Recording Sheet

Name ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Number of Words 1st Writing</th>
<th>Number of Words 2nd Writing</th>
<th>Number of Words 3rd Writing</th>
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3. Timed Sentence Writing

What is it?
A timed, free writing exercise with a twist.

Students look at picture prompts and write three sentences using target language.

The objective is to isolate and practice key sentence patterns so that students can learn them by heart through timed, repeated practice. Unlike conventional free writing exercises, the thrust of this activity is accuracy. Unlike boring drills, this guided writing exercise incorporates an element of creativity and variability.

Set Up
1. Prepare images. Usually three to five images per session is sufficient.
2. Select target language before the lesson. Like most fluency exercises, the target language should be material covered in a previous class; new material is not introduced during a fluency activity.

Flow
Teacher instructions: write three sentences per picture within the time limit. The class will see four pictures. That means 12 sentences.

1. Review target language (e.g. sentence patterns).
2. Encourage students to describe what they see with vivid language, use their imagination, and predict what might happen next in the image.
3. Display one picture.
4. Students begin timed writing.
5. Allow three minutes to write three sentences for the first picture; more time for slow starters, less for advanced writers.
6. Allow two minutes for each of the remaining pictures.
7. Collect student papers. Return later with feedback. Or, ask some students to write sample sentences on the board for class analysis and feedback.

Classroom Idea
Use this activity about once per month to practice sentence patterns which students have a hard time writing well.

In my university writing classes, I target simple sentences with prepositional phrases, appositives and complex sentences.
Image 3-1: Scene from a Coffee Shop.

Image 3-2: Children Playing with Toys.
Image 3-3: Saint Nicholas Gambles.

Image 3-4: Nickel Diner, Los Angeles.