

Dig It:

Writing in School Gardens



Getting Ready:

- How do you build soil health? How do you cultivate seedlings?
- How can the ideas of building soil health and cultivating seedlings help us teach writing?

Generating Soil Health + Cultivating Seedlings:

#1. Imagine your garden. It might be a real garden right now. It might be a garden from the past, it might be the garden of your dreams. It might be a combination of real and imaginary, of past and present and future.

#2. Spend a few moments with your eyes closed and imagine what you see in this garden.

#3. Open your eyes and spend a few minutes jotting down what you saw in this garden. You may write in verse or prose. You may sketch. You may mix verse and prose, images and words.

#4. Spend a few moments with your eyes closed and imagine the garden again. This time, imagine a particular season and then focus on a moment in this season. Again, it may be real or imagined, or a combination.

#5. Open your eyes and again, jot down what you saw when you focused on a moment in the garden. Remember, you may write in verse or prose. You may sketch. You may mix verse and prose, images and words.

#6. Close your eyes, and return to the moment in the garden you have just imagined. Now, imagine what you would hear in this garden. Jot this down.

#7. Close your eyes and return to the moment in the garden. This time, imagine what you smell and what you taste. Jot this down.

#8. Close your eyes and return to the moment in the garden. What do you feel? How do you feel? Are you moving? Do you feel differently in different parts of the garden? Do you smell anything new as you move? Do you see and hear anything else? Jot this down.

#9. Who else is in the garden? What else is in the garden? Write about this, and again try to use all of your senses- what do they others present in the garden look like, smell like, feel like? Where are they? How are they connected to you? To the rest of the garden?

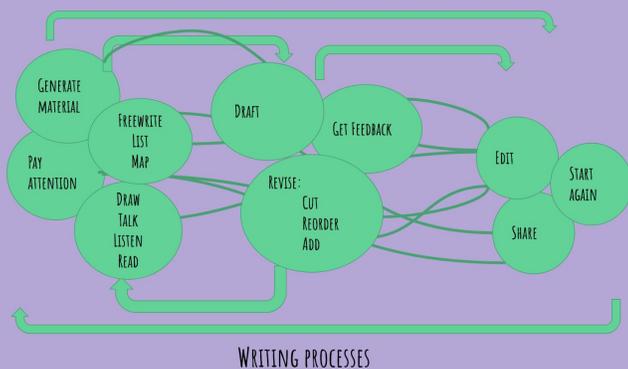
#11. How do you distinguish between who is in the garden and what is in the garden? Experiment with switching the categories.



Planting + Tending the Garden:

- What do you do to help plants grow and to keep your garden healthy?
- Which elements are predictable and which are unpredictable?
- How can our understanding of tending the garden help us write and help us teach writing?

Writing Processes:



Planting + Tending:

- #1. Reread all of the writing you have generated so far and pick out your favorite parts.
- #2. Write your favorite parts on post-its.
- #3. As you rewrite your favorite parts, play with different arrangements and ways of organizing them.
- #4. As you rewrite your favorite parts and play with arrangement, write some more. If you wish, consider the following questions: If you lived in the garden, what would your name be? What would you like to be called? What would others call you? What would you look like? Describe your roots, branches, leaves, buds, flowers, fruit or your fur, wings, scales beaks and claws. How you would look, feel, taste, smell. What you would see, feel, taste, touch, and smell? Where would you live? Who else would live there? What would they call you? What would it be like to wake up on a Monday morning? How would you enjoy a Sunday

afternoon? Would you stay up late to watch the moonrise? To stargaze? What would those night be like? What would you see? What would you hear? What would you smell? What would you do? What would your favorite time of year be? Why?

Who would be your friends, your family, your ancestors, your neighbors? What would you tell them? What would they say to you? What would you give to them? What would they give to you? What would you need from them? What would they need from you? Who would be your best friend? Why? Who would be your enemies? Why would they be your enemies? How would you protect yourself? When would it ripen? What would your fruit look like? Where would your seeds go? What would grow from your seeds? What would your seeds need to grow?

Harvesting, Preparing, Eating:

Revising + Sharing:

- #1. Pick a section or few lines to read aloud.
- #2. Read the section aloud to yourself first and consider the sounds (soft and hard, alliteration, assonance, rhyme); the literal and symbolic meanings. Play around with sound and symbolism.
- #3. Pick a section to share and practice reading it again.
- #4. When others share, considering the following:
 - ★ What does the piece say to you?
 - ★ How does it make you feel?
 - ★ What do you like about it?
 - ★ What questions do you have?
- #5. After you get feedback, jot down a note about next steps you will take to continue writing.

Next Steps:

How might you adapt this for your needs?

Stephanie Wade, PhD

swade@bates.edu @stwade

<https://communitywritinggarden.com/>

