



Virginia Schoenthaler, a teacher in Lake County, FL, is using the students' knowledge of IIM to help them with the writing portion of the state assessment. She says:

“The teachers are using Four Square for planning for the writing FCAT assessment. That instrument is designed to take 45 minutes and I believe that the planning sheet is part of the score. I don't know if they use the same framework for expository writing that they do for narrative, but I think they do. Since the questions for the Science FCAT are designed to take only 10 minutes, I can't see the children taking time to do a written plan. I'd like to train them to do some mental planning - kind of a mental check list.

I don't want the children to view this as something else to learn, but rather as a logical extension of what they already know. I want to train the teachers to see the IIM model as a cross curricular organizational and thinking tool rather than a once or twice a year research project that they check off of their Scope and Sequence lists in language arts.”

On the next page, you will find a sample FCAT Science question, and how the IIM writing plan was used.

If you'd like to find out more from Virginia, her e-mail is ginscho@aol.com



USING THE 7 STEPS OF IIM FOR A WRITING SAMPLE/TEST

- Step 1 – Topic: What is this prompt about?
Step 2 – Goal setting: What am I asked to do?
Step 3 – Research: What facts do I have? What else do I know about this topic? Glossary words?
Step 4 – Organization – How do I organize my information for my writing?
a. Introductory or topic sentence
b. Main ideas and supporting details
c. Conclusion
Step 5 – Goal Evaluation – Have I included enough information to answer the question completely and accurately?
Step 6 – Product: Write the paragraph.
Step 7 – Presentation: How will this look to the reader? A final edit for content and style

Example

10 INQUIRE EXPLAIN READ

Water hyacinth is a weed that forms a thick mat of leaves on the surface of water. How would water hyacinth affect the growth of other plants below the water's surface?

Explain your answer.

Step 1 – Topic: Water hyacinths

Step 2 – Goal Setting: Answer the question “What is the effect of water hyacinths on the growth of below-water plants?”

Step 3 – Research

Facts: keeps out sunlight, absorbs most oxygen, fish killed, water flow blocked

Step 4 – Organizing

- a. The beautiful water hyacinth is a vicious killer in disguise
- rapid growth cycle
 - quickly covers surface of pond, lake
 - negative effect on other water plants:
blocks sunlight, starves water of oxygen, impacts water flow leading to polluted water, kills algae – fish food
- b. So beware of this silent killer. Soon under a magnificent bed of flowers will be an “dead” pond with no fish or plant life.

Step 5 – Goal Evaluation: My facts will give a complete explanation of my thesis.

Step 6 – Product

The beautiful water hyacinth is really a vicious killer in disguise. Within a few weeks of its appearance in a pond, it can rapidly spread its root tentacles across the water. This mat causes a negative cycle. The sunlight can't get into the water, the water is deprived of oxygen, algae dies, fish starve, and water flow is blocked, leading to still, polluted water. So, beware of this silent killer. Soon under a magnificent bed of flowers will be a “dead” pond with no fish or plant life.

Step 7 – Presentation: I have checked for content, spelling, and grammar.