Building writing into the texture of your class: 
Connecting writing to speaking

Comprehension checks

**How**
- At the end of a lecture or class discussion, stop and ask students to write for a short time (2-5 minutes). You may ask them to answer a question, apply content to a practical situation, or work a problem (e.g., in a math course). Be sure the task is very clear, probably by writing it.
- Have pairs of students exchange their writing, read it over, and briefly discuss their answers. Then ask the class as a whole what questions, confusions, or interesting perspectives arose when they compared answers. Students’ writing could be turned in or added to a course workbook or journal.

**Why**
- A comprehension check forces students to review the lecture. Sharing the writing helps to identify questions, issues, or confusions that students may not have been aware of. Discussing these questions in class or reading over the answers provides you with some insight into what students understand well and what they do not.

Short in-class interviews

**How**
- Direct students to interview each other in pairs in the class about a topic that is being covered or has been covered. In a political science class, for example, a short opinion survey might be done. In a foreign language class, you might assign a personal interview about likes and dislikes. In any class, students might interview each other about an issue that arises out of readings, lectures or class discussions.
- Interviews may come at the end of class to review issues raised or prepare for the next session. You may also use an interview as a lead-in to a discussion, lecture, or other activity.
- Issues or questions for the interview should be very clear, which usually means that these assignments need to be given in written form.
- Results of the interviews may be reported in a short paragraph or added to a journal.

**Why**
• Short in-class interviews can help prepare for or review content, connect course content to students' personal experience, facilitate class discussion, foster the development of a learning community, and connect oral language use to written language.