Building writing into the texture of your class: 
Using writing to manage class work

Proposals

How

• Have students write proposals for class assignments of any kind. You might ask students to propose topics for papers, questions for tests, readings to cover or issues to focus on. Proposals might be for individual work, small group work, or whole class tasks.
• Proposals should be concise, but students should explain and defend their recommendations.
• Respond to the content of proposals. You may also use them as preparation for small group or class meetings to decide on tasks.

Why

• Proposals can make students’ more active in the learning process, give them practice making an argument in a real situation, and increase their motivation. They also help you to manage, motivate, and respond in progress to writing and research projects.

Progress reports, memos, and minutes

How

• Have students write short progress reports on writing or research projects. You might want to give students a model for this. The progress reports should be very concise and clear. Respond to the content of the reports as needed.
• Give students a sample memo form. Ask them to use memos to communicate on specific types of class business such as explanations for lateness and requests for conferences, alternate testing times, or changes in an assignment. Respond to the content of the memos. You may keep them as a paper trail of class business or ask students to keep them as part of a class journal.
• If you have students working on projects in groups, ask them to keep and turn in minutes of the meetings. Give students models to follow so they know what information and what level of detail you want. Use the minutes as a window into group processes, to respond to their work in progress and to help you evaluate their final product.

Why

• These types of writing help you to manage, motivate, monitor, and respond in progress to writing and research projects. They can also help you to manage class business and create a paper trail of decisions to refer to. They give students practice with writing in general and specifically with types that are common in many organizations.