**Writing Strategy**

**4-2-1 Free Write**

**Purpose**

* To organize students’ thoughts after or while reading content specific material.
* To help students learn to identify important ideas from non-fiction or fiction texts.
* To be able to explain and defend the important ideas that each students identifies.
* To weigh all ideas and collaboratively agree on one big idea that holds the material together.
* To use a free writing strategy to reflect on that one big idea.

**Directions**

1. Have students individually read an article or other content specific text.
2. Students individually identify four important ideas presented in the reading and write them on their 4-2-1 Free Write Organizer.
3. Students then meet in pairs to discuss their ideas and agree on the two most important ideas.
4. Pairs combine to create groups of four who share their ideas and come to a consensus on which idea is the most important (the “Big Idea”).
5. Teacher collects and discusses with students every group’s “Big Idea”. Together they select the idea that is most important.
6. Students individually free write for 5 minutes on that one “Big Idea”, explaining what they know about the idea so that someone who was not in the class would understand (if students become stuck they write about why they are stuck).
7. Students return to their groups of 4 and listen to each other’s written responses.
8. The teacher leads a whole class discussion of how the “Big Idea” has shaped the reading.

4 – 2 - 1 Free Write Organizer

Individually: Four Ideas

Pairs: Two

Central Ideas

Groups of Four:

The One Big Idea

Free Write