Teaching calculus often demands finding a delicate balance between supporting students who have gaps in their background skills and encouraging interaction with the material. Full integration of semi-structured, low-stakes writing assignments can help you shape your course, allowing an environment where students feel supported, start taking intellectual risks, and build the skills expected of more mature students while learning the material. We present here an easy-to-implement vehicle for incorporating writing to support student learning in the mathematics classroom, along with preliminary results. (Received September 20, 2016)