

Follow-up Discussion

Professional Development Monthly Advisor and Planner (PDMAP)

Writing Instruction

January 2011

Discussion Questions:

What emphasis does your instruction place on writing?

1. What means have you used to discover your adult learners' attitudes about writing? What attitudes have you discovered? In what ways have your adult learners' attitudes about writing differed from your own or from those of experienced writers you have known? How have you moved learners beyond non-productive attitudes toward writing?
2. Elsa Auerbach's article describes five writing approaches. When your learners first came to you, which approach was dominant in their purposes for writing? Which other writing approaches have you introduced to your learners? Do you agree with Auerbach that these five approaches aren't necessarily a progressive sequence based on learners' writing proficiency?
3. How have you used authentic materials in writing instruction with your learners?
4. What challenges have you faced when transitioning your learners from personal writing about their own lives and experiences to formal writing such as academic essays with an assigned genre (compare and contrast, persuasion, analysis)?
5. Do you teach the five-step writing process to your learners? How did you learn the five steps? What challenges have you faced in teaching the process to your adult learners? Have your learners adopted this process enough to use it on their own?

6. The articles describe different writing connections. Writing can be connecting only to learners' experiences or imaginations (free writing). It can be connected to the teacher (dialogue journals) or connected to authentic materials (job applications). Writing can also be connected to texts learners have read (academic essays). Which of these methods of connection is most common in the writing you teach?

7. There are several approaches to revising and/or editing student writing – self, peer, or teacher. Which have you used. What have you found to be the advantages and disadvantages of each?

8. What are the greatest writing challenges you experience with low literacy learners, either ABE or ESL? What techniques or activities have you found to be successful in moving their writing forward?

9. What are the greatest writing challenges you experience with high-level learners, practicing for their GED essay or preparing to transition to the writing demands of post-secondary education? What techniques or activities have you found to be successful in moving their writing forward?