Literacy

/ˈlidərəsē,ˈlitrəsē/

noun

- the ability to read and write

THE LAUNCH

Diversified Basic Education Program Newsletter

for English Adult Educators in Québec

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A MESSAGE FROM PROCEDE ON LITERACY EDUCATION IN THE QUÉBEC ADULT SECTOR

Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It i s a bulwark against poverty and a building block of development, an essential complement to investments in roads, dams, clinics and factories.

Literacy is a platform for democratization, and a vehicle for promotion of cultural and national identity. Especially for girls and women, it is an agent of family health and nutrition. For everyone, everywhere, literacy is along with education in general, a basic human right"   **–Kofi Annan**

Literacy topics have come to the forefront in adult education because of the increased demands of the Diversfied Basic Education Program, which are in stark contrast with the reading and writing abilities of the learners it is said to service.

This DBE program is vastly different from its predecessor, and therefore requires a new set of instructional strategies to accompany it. The program has changed, and hence the instructional strategies have to change too.

Reading and writing in education have always been a priority, but they have encountered trends and fads that may have led educators and learners down an inefficacious path.

The increased demands of the DBE now encourage and require educational professionals to review literacy strategies in both the reading and writing domain in order to help learners not only achieve their educational goals, but help them become participatory members of society.

This literacy guide is not prescriptive, but instead offers some researched and proven instructional pedagogy that can help bridge the gap between the mandate and the classroom reality.
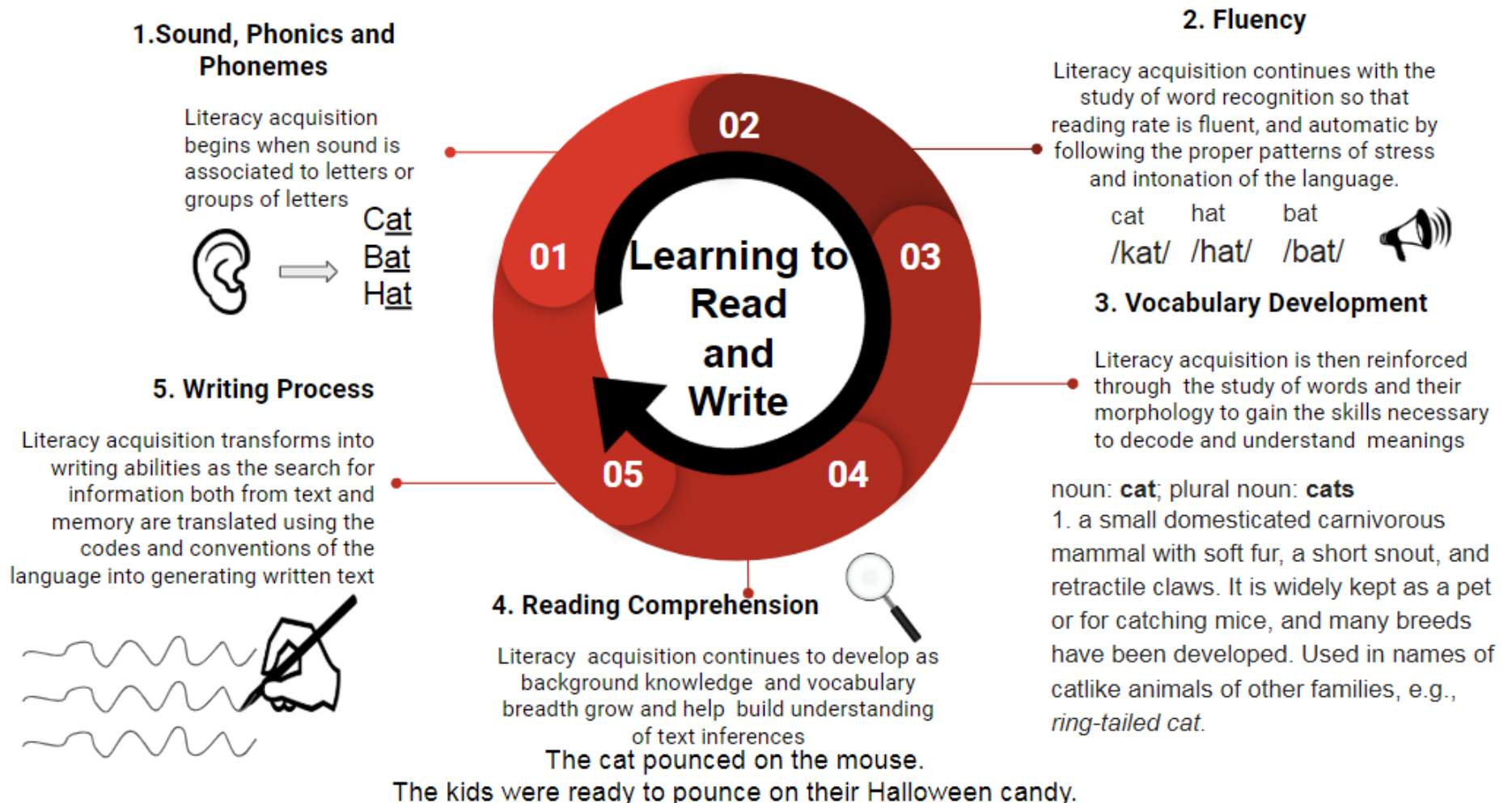
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LEARNING HOW TO READ AND WRITE

Literacy is a taught skill, and it is a learned competency. Disruptions or underdevelopment, in the cycle and/or stages of its acquisition process, can lead to compounded reading and writing difficulties in learners. Understanding the map and teaching to it is key to literacy instruction.

1. Sound, Phonics and Phonemes

Literacy acquisition begins when sound is associated to letters or groups of letters

Cat
Bat
Hat

2. Fluency

Literacy acquisition continues with the study of word recognition so that reading rate is fluent, and automatic by following the proper patterns of stress and intonation of the language.

cat   hat   bat
/kat/   /hat/   /bat/

3. Vocabulary Development

Literacy acquisition is then reinforced through the study of words and their morphology to gain the skills necessary to decode and understand meanings

noun: **cat**; plural noun: **cats**
1. a small domesticated carnivorous mammal with soft fur, a short snout, and retractile claws. It is widely kept as a pet or for catching mice, and many breeds have been developed. Used in names of catlike animals of other families, e.g., *ring-tailed cat.*

4. Reading Comprehension

Literacy acquisition continues to develop as background knowledge and vocabulary breadth grow and help build understanding of text inferences
The cat pounced on the mouse.
The kids were ready to pounce on their Halloween candy.

5. Writing Process

Literacy acquisition transforms into writing abilities as the search for information both from text and memory are translated using the codes and conventions of the language into generating written text

Learning to Read and Write

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Have you noticed a slight increase in the amount of reading that learners are exposed to and required to complete in the Diversified Basic Education program? That is because the DBE is a competency based program that relies on learning/evaluation situations, scenarios and complex tasks for learning (Secondary Cycle Two , n.d).

A learner can no longer read a question and answer by selecting a multiple choice letter, or look at an equation problem and solve it. They are mandated to first read a sometimes long and difficult text or scenario and then produce answers that demonstrate particular competencies.

The problem therein lies in that the skills required for learners to understand the competency based DBE courses are no longer just base reading skills, but sophisticated ones. And, much more sophisticated skills than some adult learners may possess.

A study of adult learners' reading levels in Quebec

A formal study conducted by PROCEDE's coordinator, Paul Laplante, in 2013, demonstrated that learners, in 18 secondary four level adult English classes, scored between secondary one and two reading levels.

Reading demands of the DBE

The Diversified Basic Education program has, however, upped the ante on reading requirements of adult learners and regularly demand extensive reading documents, complex scenarios, and inferenced reading exam questions. The fifteen historical documents attached to the Contemporary World exam is a very good example of this increased reading demand, and so is reading and understanding mock exam questions such as the one recommended by the **Regional Geography of Quebec course** that ask learners, "How might the Capitale-Nationale region manage urban sprawl as part of its urban development strategy?".

Text Complexity

The level of qualitative text complexity (**lexile level)** (Fisher, Frey , and Lapp 2016), that learners will encounter in the DBE program will register between the disciplinary level of the course and higher. Clearly, the discrepancy between the adult learner reading results and the demands of the "new" program are sounding alarm bells throughout adult centres in the province of Québec.

Learning How to Read

Learning to read is a complex task (The Basics, 2016) that starts early on in childhood education, and that has skills built upon one another (**refer to literacy map**). An adult learner who struggles

with reading may have had an interruption in that process or may not have had the opportunity to develop one of the stages to their full capacity. There is also the possibility that a learner has varied learning issues that may complicate the ability to acquire reading skills. Regardless of the situation, it is very important for educational professionals in adult education to understand the process and the stages that are involved in learning how to read. Even though reading fluency seems to be more of an elementary class issue, it actually does manifest itself in adult education classrooms as well.

Reading Instruction

The only way that educators will help bridge the gap between the current low reading scores of many learners and the high and extensive reading demands of the DBE is to teach learners explicitly how to read and understand sophisticated texts. And, oddly enough, it doesn't only start with reading more, but also includes much talking, discussing and reading aloud in class (Frey and Fisher, 2013).

The reality that "The vast majority of [us] practicing teachers are graduates of B.Ed. programs in which [we] may have had only one course, or just part of a course, that focused specifically on language and literacy education" (Willows, 2008), may make reading instruction a new teaching task in the case of the content areas, or it might require some pedagogical revision, in the case of language ones.

What Reading Skills Provide

Providing adult learners of Québec with strong reading abilities is not only done as a requirement to fulfill DBE end of course outcomes or to achieve high school leaving credits, but is done to provide the valued and vital skills that are required in today's world (Cain, 2007). Also, "Advances in technology mean that reading, in the form of e-mail and text messages, is now a primary means of social communication for many people" (Cain, 2007, p.2). Teaching learners how to read in a rigorous manner is not only mandated by the government, but by real, real life situations.

" The world of texts, whether print or digital, represents a history of or past and the promise of our future".

(Fisher and Frey, 2013)

READING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS

Q: How do I teach reading skills to adults that may require some very basic skills that are classically covered in earlier elementary grades, without insulting anyone?

You are right that some adult learners require basic reading instruction that are found in early childhood education, but that would seem insulting in an adult educational setting. However, the process of literacy attainment does not change because learners are adults and some class instruction does need to "go back" and cover basic skills. Here are some reading strategies that follow the literacy map process:

1) Fluency: Make sure that your ENG texts are more often than not accompanied by an audio feature or that they are read aloud in class by an expert reader. It is this "read aloud" exercise that provides learners with the prosody (sing song quality) required for learners to hear and then later model fluent reading. Give learners an opportunity to read out loud as well, in a group or record on audio equipment (Rasinski and Samuels, 2011).

2) Vocabulary: Extensively cover vocabulary words, meanings, and construction, such as prefixes and suffixes, before reading the text and provide it in a visual format as much as possible. The interruption of unknown vocabulary words in the reading process results in two problems: 1) it actually blocks the ability for learners to comprehend what they are reading and 2) it also interrupts the prosody required for fluency (Blachowicz, Fisher, and Ogle, 2006).

3) Reading Comprehension: Make sure that learners have a deep understanding of the text they read by

Annotating text: Model how to take notes during the reading process. Use an annotation system, so that annotation is methodical and automatic for learners. This will provide added information for learners about the reading that they can refer to independently (Frey and Fisher, 2013).

Using graphic organizers: Use graphic organizers to help map out the reading material they have been presented as well as visually demonstrate connections and relationships within the text.

QAR questions: Build reading questions using Raphael's (1984) instructional intervention, Question-Answer relationships QAR model (Stahl, 2004) instead of relying on pre-made or preprepared questions that sometimes come with text, and before you introduce mock exam questions:

- Right there: answers are found in singe answer in the text
- Putting it Together or think and Search: answers may be found across sections of text
- Author and You: answers require the reader to infer meaning from the text because the answer to the question is not stated explicitly
- On My Own: answers rely on the readers' experience and knowledge (Stahl, 2004)

READING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS

Q: Do you have any recommendations for the course texts that I can select for learners?

Yes, consider the lexile level of your assigned informational and literary text (quantative): (Fisher, Frey, and Lapp, 2015)

Grade	Lexile level
2-3	450-725L
4-5	645-845L
6-8	860--1010L
9-10	960-1115L
11-12	1070-1220L

The Lexile level is a measuring tool that specifies text complexity. The levels are not meant to limit or control what text you propose or choose as a teacher, but help plan and organize your literacy strategies around them. It is recommended that easy texts, lower lexile levels of text in relation to your learner's grade reading abilities, can be assigned more independently. Readings with higher lexile levels than a learner possesses can still be used as a rigorous reading activity, but under the strict guidance and instruction of the teacher (Fisher, Frey and Lapp, 2015) . One should also consult the reading material that is presented during the end of course outcome evaluations, and make sure that that lexile level of reading comprehension is presented, reviewed and worked on in class. You can consult lexile levels of texts on certain websites, such as **Newsela.com** and **Commonlit.org** or use a **text readabilty calculator** to help you decipher a text's lexile level .

And consider the background knowledge of learners (qualitative), for literary texts: (Fisher, Frey, and Lapp, 2015). Think of the "structure, coherence, and audience appropriateness"(Fisher, Frey, and Lapp, 201, p. 43), that best matches the text to the learner.

Q: But my learners are not able to read at the grade lexile level that they are currently registered in. What do I do?

Use and model the recommended above reading strategies. You might not be able to bring a learner to the needed lexile level in the immediate, but it does provide skills that helps to improve reading comprehension in the future.

Q: Should I create comprehension questions to pair with the text or should I prepare learners for the exam questions?

You can do both! The exam questions are often the ones that are the most complex on the reading scale, and require high levels of inferencing skills and also require learners to make personal connections. Make sure that learners have had the opportunity to answer "Right There", "Putting it Together", and "Author and You" questions first (Stahl, 2004).

Q: There isn't time in class to cover all the reading necessary in the course, and my students do not often complete assigned home reading to help them succeed the end pf course exams.

Make sure that independent reading is appropriate to their instructional level, which may be lower than the disciplinary level, so that they can understand what they read without your assistance. As well, allow for some choice reading so that interest might spark motivation. The choice readings can still be guided by you in that there is an offer or a guidance of what to read. Also, try as much as possible to offer independent readings that can be supported by an audio feature. **ESL-BITS** has a big selection of narrative and informational texts to choose from.

READING IN THE CONTENT AREAS

Q: My learners are struggling with reading the learning situations, scenarios or tasks, what should I do?

A: Many learners struggle with these texts for several reasons. First, they often lack the prior knowledge needed to understand what they are reading. Second, they might not be fluent readers. Third, they are possibly lacking the vocabulary knowledge needed to understand what they are reading. So, in light of these possibilities, here is how you can help your students better understand the situations, scenarios or tasks you are presenting.

1) Show a video prior to provide background knowledge or to remind them of it, turning the captions on to activate the speech to word association. This is more than just an engagement exercise. It is part of reading comprehension (Benefits, 2017).

2) Review the vocabulary words that are presented in a visual format as much as possible (photos, images, emoticons) and display your word wall at all times, prior to reading, so that learners can refer to them at any time necessary (Lane and Allen, 2010).

3) Teachers should be the first ones to read the text out loud, as learners follow both with their own copy as well as having it displayed on the Smartboard with a particular focus on the prosody (fluency, sing song like quality) of the reading. This actually starts to provide the brain with meaning to the reading content and models reading fluency (Rasinski and Samuels, 2011).

4) Have learners read the text out loud with you so that they can copy the prosody of the reading (Rasinski and Samuels, 2011).

5) Annotate the text on the Smartboard for a deeper understanding of the text and have learners copy your annotation notes exactly (Fisher and Frey, n.d).

6) If time permits, accompany the text with comprehension questions that relate to your disciplinary area, not only to assess their understanding but to scaffold reading comprehension skills (Stahl, 2004).

Q: Should I teach vocabulary words? And if so, which ones?

A: Yes, vocabulary words must be explicitly taught, especially in specific content areas (McKeown and Beck, 2011). First, the vocabulary words you teach should match the end of course outcomes, and they should match the popular words that encompass your discipline (McKeown and Beck, 2011). Don't shy away from making vocabulary instruction fun by playing and preparing vocabulary exercises. Click here

Q: Should I make them look in a dictionary?

Yes and no. Some of the words you want learners to know are key to their success in your class, and having them look it up in a dictionary could be very time consuming with misunderstands of the word anyway. Provide the meanings for the words they must know. Using a dictionary is under debate by experts (McKeown and Beck, 2011), but the reality is that they are allowed dictionaries in exams, so they need to learn how to use them. All teachers should give learners strategies on how to decipher dictionary meanings.

READING IN THE CONTENT AREAS

Q: What is text annotation and does it work?

Text annotation is when you make notes on the text you are reading. There are many different ways to annotate text. For example, some teachers tell learners to highlight words they don't know, some say to underline important concepts, some put small notes in the margin. Whatever you decide, try to use annotation strategies that are shared by colleagues and that require minimal effort. You don't want a learner to reply that they cannot highlight a word because they don't have a highlighter. Pencil and paper annotation are the best method considering that the MEES exams are pencil and paper only. And yes, it does work. Learners cannot remember everything that is being discussed in class regarding the text they are reading. They should annotate text the way you explicitly model it on the Smartboard, for example (Fisher and Frey, 2007).

Q: Well, these are really nice strategies, but I don't have time to cover much literacy and cover the curriculum content. Where do I start and finish with literacy education in a science class.

You are right, this is a very big challenge for all teachers. Perhaps you can team up with the language teachers and make your themes and topics known to them so that they can incorporate your topics into their lessons and help with the burden of prior knowledge, vocabulary and even chosen texts. If you really are on your own then sticking to the basics is best: 1) read to them or turn on reading audio, and have them repeat it 2) videos with captions on 3) vocabulary instruction and word walls 4) text annotation.

Q: I have heard that reading more equates to reading better in the long run, but my students don't really read more than they curriculum requires them to and even less outside of the classroom. What should I do?

Your time with them is limited by scheduling and curriculum constraints. It is difficult to offer the "extra" reading that is recommended by experts, in adult education. However, you can still offer and make available extra articles, books, and magazines. Create a buzz around around a controversial article, or present a bestseller book that you just finished to peek their interest.

Q: I don't have time to look for extra reading material for my students since the curriculum is demanding enough!

You can sign up on certain websites that deliver very compelling and student friendly texts to your inbox everyday. **Newsela.com** is a very popular and varied website to start with.

Q: There is much talk about graphic organizers. Are they helpful for reading comprehension or writing skills?

They are helpful for both. Often times graphic organizers are handed out prior to a writing activity, as a preparation to a rough draft. However, graphic organizers are a great tool for reading comprehension and can be used to organize and deepen learners' understanding of text. They can be used with or without a writing activity. There are many organizer templates available, that can even be shared amongst different disciplines to further learner connections and understandings (Fisher, Frey, and Williams, 2002).

wHy writing maters even wen it dosnt cownt?

Writing instruction has encountered its fair share of fads and trends. Those trends range from abandoning the teaching of grammar (Mccormack- Colbert et al, 2018), to the popularly implemented, but proven to be ineffective, *Whole Language High Jinks'* (Moats, 2007).

The increased writing demands of the **Diversified Basic Education Program (DBE)** in the Québec Adult Education sector, has forced educators to take a closer look at writing instruction and assessment both at the core subject and at the content areas. The transition from a multiple choice based history exam (content oriented) to an essay based one (competency oriented), requires it!

Before educators adopt another trend or opt for a new instructional strategy, to address these new demands, it would be best to solidify the belief that writing using the proper codes and conventions of the English language does matter (Mayer, 2008) in the Diversified Basic Education program, even when it is not directly assessed.

Explicit Writing Competency Demands

The DBE does cover the specific competency of writing in only the English and French language courses under the "Produces text" banner. Under this competency, adult learners are explicitly expected to write to demonstrate their ability to fulfill that demand, such as a **600 word argumentative essay in the ENG course 5103-3**.

Implicit Writing Competency Demands

The DBE, though, has many other courses that request a mastery of other competencies, ranging from reading text to interpreting a contemporary issue. The caveat here being that demonstrating mastery of those competencies is more often than not encased in a writing assignment. For example, an adult learner is expected to demonstrate his/her reading comprehension abilities by writing a 250 word **"comparative analysis"**, or demonstrate his competency in financial literacy by writing a 250 word letter to an imaginary friend. Though implicit writing demands did exist in the previous program, they were not present in these amounts.

Clearly the art and mastery of writing is more important than ever to ensure that adult learners can answer the demands of the DBE program.

Explicit Writing Assessment

Marks are awarded explicitly for using proper writing codes and conventions in the language courses. Learners must demonstrate their ability to write to obtain passing grades as specified in the evaluation grids.

Implicit Writing Assessment

There also exists, however, an implicit assessment of writing in other competencies. According to the MEES, a learner who completes the 250 word history essay is assessed on **"a clear explanation of their understanding"**, a learner who reads in English will be assessed on their ability to provide a **"thorough and clear analysis"**, and a learner in science class will be graded on their ability to "provide complete and clear explanations of his or her message".

These sample graded criteria are an overall reflection of the implicit writing assessment that is now present in most DBE criterion referenced rubrics.

Though writing skills did not affect the grade outcome of past tests, they greatly do so now in both a direct and indirect manner.

What writing skills provide

Teaching learners how to write is a complex task, but a necessary one. Strong writing skills not only provide them with an opportunity to attain their high school accreditation or prerequisites for vocational training but life long opportunities in schooling, employment, and integration into society (Graham and Perin, 2007).

Literacy Map

Acquiring writing skills is last in the long line up of literacy attainment. It is a build up of processes that actually entails much reading. Becoming a skillful writer means that learners have a background knowledge in phonics, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension. This spring board of content knowledge is the necessary nucleus to the writing process. Any disruptions or underdevelopment in the base will often translate into writing difficulties.

Explicit Teaching

The proven and necessary remedy to help learners succeed the DBE and future endeavors is to provide explicit and systematic writing instruction in all content areas, even when "it dosnt cownt", because we know that it really does!

"Writing is hard work and every opportunity to practice and develop good habits is important"
Louisa Moats (Literacy, 2018)

WRITING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS

Q: Is there one right way to teach writing?

No, there is not one right way to teach learners how to write. However, it is important that English teachers use a proven set of standard skills and strategies of the writing process. One such method is called the *Self Regulated Strategy Development Method*, developed by **Dr. Karen Harris**, and provides a framework for teaching writing skills (Harris, Graham, and Laud, 2013).

1. Discuss: Talk with learners about their writing abilities and self-regulation abilities

2. Model: Model how to write, and model how you review and assess writing

3. Memorize: Teach how to and expect learners to memorize writing strategies

4. Repeat: Use writing strategies and self regulation strategies as often as possible

5. Independence: Turn over the writing responsibility to learner while monitoring work and progress

As well, the **National Writing Project** recommends teachers teach writing skills instead of assigning them using the following guidelines:

1. Permitting learners to choose writing topics that matter to them, versus assigning a writing topic

2: Specifying audience and purpose in the writing assignment versus not identifying them or making them too general

3. Spending more time teaching writing skills and strategies instead of correcting them

3. Provide and review writing models before assigning questions to compare, contrast, summarize, describe, narrate review etc.

4. Allow learner to review growth in writing instead of omitting it or doing it for them

5. Encourage learners to revise and edit, not just rewrite a "good copy" correcting grammar errors

6. Require and model brainstorming and writing plans versus accepting first copy only

7. Display and publish writing because topics are exciting and interesting versus repetitive and traditionally assigned

Q: But I grew up and learned in a more holistic manner such as "Whole Language' and I turned into an English teacher. Why a "new way" now?

Holistic writing programs that do not focus on teaching explicit writing skills and providing systematic writing strategies are simply not answering to the 21st century writing demands (Moats, 2007). Writing skills are "the currency of the new workplace and global economy"(National Writing Project, 2018). Oral and written communication skills feature as the top competency that is required for working candidates as revealed in a **2013 Microsoft study** (New Study, 2013).

WRITING IN THE LANGUAGE CLASS

Q: Should I teach grammar rules, spelling and syntax?

Yes, very much so. Learners need to be explicitly and systematically taught how to write correctly (Mayer, 2008).

Q: What do you mean by explicit and systematic?

Explicit is that is is directly taught, such as the rules and regulations of capitalization, commas, punctuation, parallel structure, etc. Systematic means that it is taught using a consistent plan and method, such as teaching topic sentences and thesis statements at a planned time in the duration of course and using methodology that is known to show positive results in the writing production (Graham, and Perin, 2007), such as ***Step Up To Writing*** .

Q: What grammar exercises work best?

Match grammar exercises to real life grammar demands. For example, you probably have not had to underline verbs or circle nouns in real life, but you have had to correct or edit an email. Model the email correction on the Smartboard as a grammar exercise by referring to grammar rules (Mccormack-Colbert, Ware, and Jones, 2018).

Q: But the grammar exercises that are available in most publications, or the Internet are asking to underline and circle. Are you saying they are wrong to ask learners to do that?

Studies show that this practice does not help learners improve their writing skills when not done in context of a writing task. It is best to teach grammar rules, and then practice writing using and focusing on those codes and conventions of the English language.

Q: Should I write with them, or should I let learners write on their own?

You can do both! Model the writing process using the "I" perspective", and provide the vision of excellence. Gradually release the responsibility to learners in a scaffolded manner, and give them many opportunities to write with accompanying feedback.

Q:But some learners have few writing skills, and they must write long and detailed answers in the ENG end of course exams. Where do I start?

Provide the background knowledge and vocabulary words to incorporate in their writing. Some learners have basic skills, but not enough precise vocabulary or information to activate the writing process. It is important to remember that that ability to write is firmly rooted in reading exercises (Graham and Harris, 2016)

Q: Should learners type on the computer or use pencil and paper?

Learners should practice writing in a manner where they can automatize the process to succeed the end of course exams. Writing a 600 word argumentative essay with a mandated pencil and paper should be practiced simply because the DEDs demand it. Learners who have special accommodations need to practice writing in a manner that they can automatize the process to succeed end of course outcomes with the tool or the method that they have been permitted to use (Mayer, 2008).

WRITING IN THE CONTENT AREAS

Q: I do not teach English Language Arts, but my course requires learners to possess many writing skills. What do I do?

Model the writing demands that are required in your course. Modeling the history essay or the lab report and teaching key sentence structure for clarity and coherence and vocabulary words that reflect the end of course outcomes is a good way to start (Harris, Graham, and Laud, 2013).

Q: But if I write the lab report or the history essay, am I not spoon feeding them? Shouldn't they do it on their own?

Modeling and reviewing performance exemplars, and visions of excellence in writing is not spoon feeding, but good pedagogy. Provide and instruct them with the models from the start of your course and gradually release the writing responsibility to learners progressively over time with proper instruction (Harris, Graham, and Laud, 2013). Handing out a model and expecting learners to copy from it, is not recommended.

Q: When I assign any writing task, learners tell me that they do not know what to write about.

This could be a way for a learner to signal that they do not have enough background knowledge to make connections with the writing task, they do not have enough vocabulary to put their thoughts into words, they do not have enough text to refer to in their writing, or that they do not have a model from which to base their writing on. Make sure you have filled those gaps to the best of your professional abilities.

Q: I don't have time to do all that writing in class because I have to teach the curriculum content.

Then providing models of exemplars will be especially important. Perhaps you can film the accompanying instructions once from the Smartboard feature, or from your phone and make the video available for learners to consult at all times. Yes, it will take initial effort, but the instructions will always be available to your students afterwards in and out of the classroom.

Q: Can I use models from the Internet or from Sofad?

You need to use and demonstrate models that both reflect the curriculum content as well the MEES criterion referenced rubrics (McTighe and Wiggins, 2005). In some cases you might be able to find suitable models, and in some cases you will not and will have to write them out yourself. And, it would be best to write it out through a modeling process with an audience of learners.

Q: Are you saying that I should teach to the exam writing requirements?

Yes and no. No, instructing your learners on how to write in your disciplinary area (history, science, Math, English) requires systematic and explicit instruction that transcends the exam. But, yes, you are purposefully teaching the writing demands of the exam (McTighe and Wiggins, 2005). If it has an essay component to it, than you need to explicitly teach essay writing skills with a particular focus on your content area. It is best not to assume a learner has the writing skills required to succeed the course, or that they will "pick up" the skills along the course.

WRITING IN THE CONTENT AREAS

Q: But shouldn't students who come in at the cycle two levels of secondary (3, 4, 5) already have those writing skills?

Perhaps so, but it can depend on so many factors.The process of reading and writing attainment may or may not have been observed in their previous education, or they may be struggling with learning issues. It is best not to assume that a learner in your class has the required writing skills of the level they are registered in. Teach with explicit writing instruction in mind.

Q: Don't they teach writing in the English classes? Why do I have to explicitly teach writing in Math or science? That is not how the program is devised, and again, I just don't have the time!

Yes, they do teach writing in English, but perhaps not the type of writing required in your content area. They do not cover the specifics of a lab report in English class, nor do they review the necessary vocabulary to complete it. Your content area writing requirements are specific to your course and may not have transferred over. Learners will need your guidance.

Q: Well what about the general writing, like an essay? Don't all learners learn how to write an essay in English class.

Not always depending on the English course they are taking. For example, in secondary 3 English learners write letters not essays. The first official essay they are evaluated on occurs in secondary 5. This could possible never target your adult learner. But you can work with the English teacher and standardize how you in turn teach how to write an essay or an opinion piece using the models from English class.

Q: Should I request correct sentences, spelling and grammar?

You should definitely model it, provide it and request it. You can provide feedback to students on their writing specifying what they need to work on. Whatever codes and convention of the writing that is requested in your content area, they should be practiced as a vision of excellence (Literacy, 2018).

Q: But the grammar, codes and conventions don't really count much if at all on the exams. So why should I request it?

You are right! There are no points awarded for correct sentence structure in the history essays, but they have to "explain in an excellent manner". Not sure how learners will explain in an excellent manner without the proper codes and conventions of English. So first, the demands of writing correctly are an implicit writing competency in most MEES criterion referenced rubrics. And second, written communication skills are one of the highest required competencies for future job applicants, as studied and published by **Microsoft** (New Study, 2013).

Q: I can't cover all grammar rules in my class.

Cover the codes and conventions that apply to your content area that you are teaching. For example: history class is a great subject to teach capitalization and commas, and sciences are a great subject to teach verbs and verb agreement when writing lab procedures.

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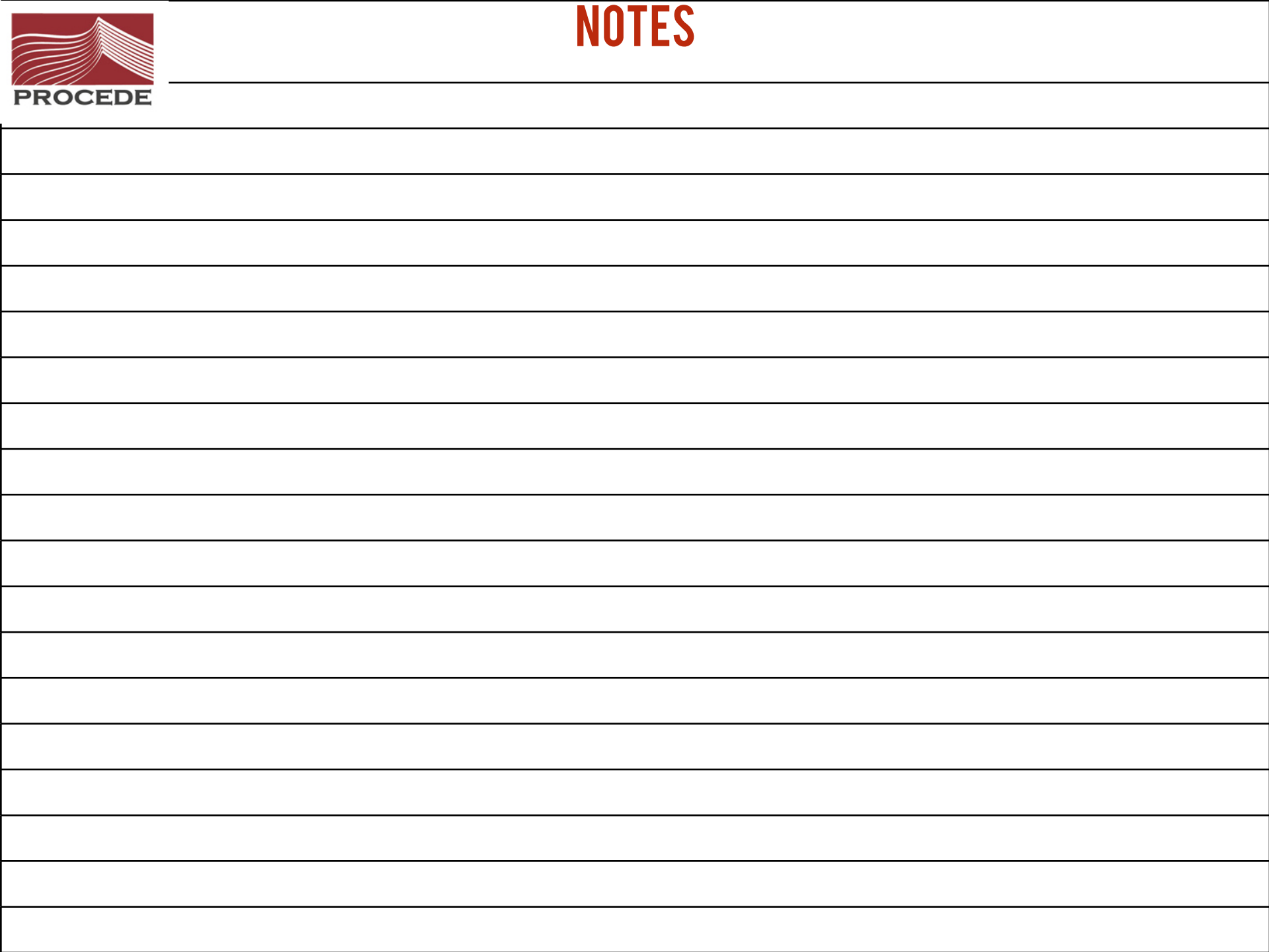http://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading-basics

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NOTES

NOTES

The role of PROCEDE, as an organization, is to act as a forum and consultative body for Québec's nine English-language school boards. In addition, PROCEDE provides policy orientations and strategy recommendations to the Québec Ministry of Education and to the nine English-language school boards. It also oversees the development and delivery of adult general education and vocational training curricula and programming.

The document provides thoroughly researched and instructional guidelines on literacy for all educational professionals and educators working in the adult education sector. PROCEDE supports this initiative as it highlights the importance of literacy skills in today's classroom, and ultimately improving the quality of people's lives. As President of PROCEDE, I would like to congratulate and commend Ms. Isabelle Bertolotti, PROCEDE's Pedagogical Consultant, for her formidable work on this literacy guide.

Mario Argiropoulos
President of PROCEDE

"Literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, it is essential to development and health, and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship." **Kofi Annan**

About Isabelle Bertolotti

Isabelle Bertolotti is a certified teacher, with close to twenty years of teaching experience. Though her accredited specialty is in the youth sector, she has taught at the elementary, high school and adult levels. She is presently working for PROCEDE as a pedagogical consultant to the English Adult sector to help implement Québec's Diversified Basic Education program. She is also currently completing her Master's degree in Education at Queen's University with a focus on literacy instruction. Her favorite hobby is writing letters to anyone and everyone who is willing to read them, or not, and gets particularly excited when she gets a response.

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