

BACKGROUND NOTES TO SESSION 3 LANGUAGE PROCESSES 1 - FOCUS ON WRITING

GENERAL

Participants will learn about writing and the writing through being involved in and reflecting upon their own writing; namely, the language decisions they make in the process of writing and the language skills and knowledge they use in order to carry out this writing.

Have a copy of the writing tasks available for each participant.

WORKSHOP

There are two workshop activities for participants to choose from. Select the one you feel most comfortable running with your group or try both activities, giving one group one activity and the other to the rest of the participants. Both activities are set out with the Black Line Masters. Suggest to participants that they may choose a different 'cause' than the 'saving the rainforest' if there is more relevant to your area, e.g. recycling. However, you must make sure that participants write in the two different genres on that topic. Be sure that participants understand that they are being asked to write so that they have a recent experience in writing in two different genres. This experience will form the basis or 'data' for the next part of the workshop when they asked to reflect on the language decisions (what was going on inside their heads) they needed to make as they were writing, as well as making explicit the language skills and knowledge they were drawing on as writers. It is important for participants to understand that they will not be sharing their writing with you or anyone else.

Suggest that they can write collaboratively but it is suggested that the group be no more than three.

Start groups quickly on the writing tasks, making sure they spend 10 minutes of each task. They may not complete the tasks but it is necessary for them to experience both.

It is best that the follow up activity to the writing be done in small groups and that the groups chart up their experiences for all to see. Some participants find 'getting inside' their own heads and reflecting on the writing experiences difficult as it is not something that is we all do naturally. They may need reminding that there are no 'right or wrong answers'; that what is important is for them to help each other to reflect deeply and make conscious what they usually do quite subconsciously. In order to support participants move into this 'metalinguistic' level some prompt questions are listed on p**.

Key points for the discussion of Walshe's model can be found in Walshe's article in the readings for this session (BSR 3:1).

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY

Modeled Writing is the Instructional Strategy for this session.

Choose a genre of writing to model which is appropriate to your audience's needs, e.g. non-fictional writing such as a science report, persuasive writing, essay writing, or how to fill out a test for teachers of older students; personal recount for younger children.

You might want to have a written first draft which you can draw on as it is often difficult to compose in front of adults while thinking aloud. This may be a necessary step for participants to do when they attempt to Model Write in front of their students for the first time.

Point out that as they become more comfortable with the strategy they will be able to compose the first draft in front of students.

It is important to think aloud as you write. Demonstrate how you considered the purpose of the writing and the intended audience for the writing. Consider such questions as you think aloud:

- ¥ why you chose to write in that particular genre (purpose and audience)
- ¥ how you chose your topic
- ¥ how you researched your topic
- ¥ how you decided on the lead
- ¥ how you spelled unknown words
- ¥ how you went about editing a part which did not make sense when you read it over.

BETWEEN SESSION READING

The Between Session Reading for this Session has been organised into a Jigsaw Activity. This is useful for several reasons:

- ¥ it lessens the amount of reading that each person must do
- ¥ it forces participants to read their section deeply as they know that they will be part of a group-share the following week
- ¥ it allows for interesting discussion and sharing in the following Group Reflection