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LitBits

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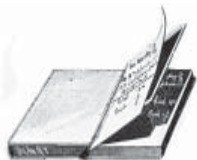
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Tutor Resource of the Month

TESL Journal consists of links to articles and lesson plans similar to the creative writing exercises on back: <http://iteslj.org/Links/TESL/Articles/Writing/>

Quote Corner:



Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together.

-Vincent Van Gogh

Assessing Confidence

New research suggests that the difference between adults that enroll in educational programs and those that do not is related to self-esteem and one's confidence in having the ability to control his or her learning.

In the May 2006 issue of the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy's *Focus on Basics*, Anastasia Lipnevich, an educational psychology PhD candidate at Rutgers University, compared students in ABE classes to those enrolled in PhD programs. Lipnevich was surprised to find overall and classroom-based self-esteem equal in both groups. All these students had decided to enroll themselves and thus anticipated some level of success.

Christine Gabali sees the other side of the spectrum as creator and leader behind UCLA Palo Alto Workplace English Literacy, which actively pursues non-native English learners. "They typically do their service jobs silently because they don't want their lack of knowledge to be exposed," Gabali explains. This group does not pursue improving their literacy skills because they feel it is out of their control. Gabali seeks change by working with employers to encourage enrollment in her free classes. Building confidence in these classes plays a large roll.

Writing exercises are a great way to monitor learner confidence; look for the use of more complex sentences, improved grammar and spelling and the development of "self" through voice.

Writing Challenge 2006 Reminder

To encourage writing at all levels, Oregon Literacy, Inc. announced this year's Writing Challenge in the October issue of *LitBits*. We challenged tutors to structure activities around writing and we challenged learners to share their stories by submitting them to Oregon Literacy. OLI will recognize student achievement and publish selected writings in future newsletters and on our website.

You may participate by submitting

a short piece of writing or essay on the following topic: What I like about living in [name of your city].

Send submissions via email (newsletter@oregonliteracy.org) or via postal mail (1001 SW Fifth Ave., Suite 320; Portland, OR 97211). Please include student's name, tutor's name, tutor center and any other information regarding reading level, country of origin, age, etc. that you would like to include.

Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is a way for learners of all levels to teach each other. Learners work collaboratively with others to plan and implement a project or solve a problem.

A blog is one way to integrate computer literacy, project-based learning and provide an outlet for learners to express themselves artistically. Creating a learner blog requires internet access but the service is free of cost. Visit <http://www.blogger.com/start> for more details.

There are no rules to determine how this project is realized, although all projects seem to progress

through common phases: identifying the purpose of the project, investigating, planning and assigning tasks, researching the topic or mode of communication, implementing, drafting a final product, sharing and evaluating what worked.

Learners can use the blog for whatever they would like. They can include brief autobiographies, share stories about their countries of origin or discuss what they are learning in the classroom.

Learners may need a little help planning or organizing but the process of blogging will become easier with a little experience.

Poetry Writing

Poetry is another way for learners to write creatively. Poetry writing may seem too advanced for learners at beginning levels but the following examples can be both fun and challenging at any level.

The Persona Poem (University of Oregon) in this example is an autobiographical poem which promotes learning new vocabulary and using vocabulary the learner already knows. Learners can use the following format to describe themselves:

Persona Poem

Line 1: first name/nickname of the person in the poem
Line 2: 4 adjectives which describe the person
Line 3: X of Y formula, describing an important relationship to the person
Line 4: 3 things s/he loves
Line 5: 3 things that scare her/him
Line 6: 3 things s/he wants to see
Line 7: resident of... + place/time/concept
Line 8: last name of the person in the poem

Sample

Hilary
Friendly, silly, intelligent, resourceful
Daughter of Karen and Edward
Who loves music, laughter and books
Who is afraid of spiders, traffic citations and the dark
Who wants to see equal rights, Italy and spring
Resident of the past, present and future
Semprevivo

An Emotion Poem (Primary Resources) also promotes learning new vocabulary and using vocabulary the learner already knows.

In addition, this format may introduce the use of similes in descriptive writing. The learner can select a human emotion and use this formula to describe the emotion:

Emotion Poem

What color is the emotion
What does it taste like
What does it smell like
What does it look like
What does it sound like
What does it feel like

Sample

Happiness is blue like a clear sky
It tastes like cheesecake
It smells like spring
It looks like a smile on a friend
It sounds like a kind voice
It feels like a warm blanket on a cold day