Developing Writing Skills in Adults

Course Description and Overview:
Developing Writing Skills in Adults is an eight-week, asynchronous online course. The course has been designed to help you discover the keys to strengthening your work in teaching writing to adult learners. The course is taught through the [Virginia Commonwealth University's Canvas learning management system](). Completion of the course is designed to require a minimum of 40 hours of your time - approximately five hours per week. However, you may find that you want to spend longer with some topics. In order to receive a certificate for participating in the *Developing Writing Skills in Adults* training; you must complete all assignments, respond to each discussion question, and respond at least once to one of your classmates in any of the week's discussion/assignment forums. There are no required textbooks.

In this course, participants will explore teaching a five-step writing process. Participants will actively participate in each of the stages of writing (pre-writing, writing, revision, editing, and presentation/publication) by completing a personal writing assignment that follows the writing process and by accessing course materials that support process writing. Course lessons and resources will include these topic areas:

- Why Write?
- Pre-Writing
- Writing the First Draft
- Strategies for Writing Instruction
- Radical Revision
- Editing: Style and Conventions
- Presentation and Publication
- Writing and Special Populations

Weekly Format:
Each week begins with an announcement that introduces the weekly content, the discussion threads, and the assignments. The facilitator will monitor discussions and assignments to provide feedback, resources, support, and answer questions. Weekly content will be conveyed through background readings and delivered in a variety of formats. Participants will engage in the content and with each other, and through weekly discussions that promote a collaborative approach to active learning. Though assignments will use an active learning approach, it is the discussions with both colleagues and the facilitator where participants will likely feel most engaged. To keep discussions as productive as possible, please stay within the timeframe outlined for this course (see *Week-by-Week Checklist of Assignments* in this syllabus for a list of what to do each week). Coursework will not be graded, but will be tracked via the *Grades* section so that participants can follow completion of all their coursework and participation in order to receive a VALRC completion certificate at the end of the course.

Both individual and group assignments will provide opportunities for participants to apply *their* learning to *their* practice. Assignments will receive feedback from the facilitator, but are non-graded.

Learning Outcome:
Each lesson addresses a different aspect of the writing process or of writing instruction. Course activities include readings, assignments, discussions, and the opportunity for participants to go through the writing process from planning to presentation. The lessons are developmental and sequential. We begin each lesson with an overview of what you will learn. Each lesson includes:

- information to review;
- important resources including websites to visit, explore, and/or bookmark;
- online discussions for you and your peers to reflect upon and participate in; and,
- assignments to complete for review by the online course facilitator and your fellow participants.

What you will be learning	How you will express and demonstrate that learning
Identify and describe the stages of the writing process.	Synthesize each stage of the writing process in order to teach the writing process by completing a personal essay.
Identify research-based strategies for writing instruction and incorporate them into your own practice.	Utilize identified resources and strategies by applying them to weekly course assignments (e.g., Discussions, written essay, lesson plan).
Understand the roles of revision and editing.	Distinguish between revision and editing in the writing process and how these steps can be applied to the peer review and publication process steps by providing feedback to peers and using feedback to edit your essay.
Create activities and lesson plans for adult learners that address different stages of the writing process.	Using course content and Virginia's adult education standards (CCRS and ELPS), incorporate each step of process writing into a complete writing activity and lesson plan.

Course Schedule:
Each lesson addresses a different aspect of the writing process or of writing instruction. Course activities include readings, assignments, and discussions. The lessons are sequential. Posts to discussions may be made at any time within the week in which the topic is being presented. Please be sure to adhere to the schedule. Lessons are self-paced within the week. Return as often as you wish to the activities and discussions.

Week #	Lessons	Assignments
Week 1:	The Writing Process and Getting Started	1. Complete the Online Learner Agreement. 2. Introduce yourself in *Building Our Online Community*. 3. Practice and discuss freewriting. 4. Submit a participation post.
Week 2:	Pre-Writing	1. Discuss the characteristics of good writing. 2. Practice and discuss pre-writing. 3. Post a participation post.
Week 3:	Writing the First Draft	1. Discuss digital technologies and writing genres. 2. Complete and discuss the point-of-view activity. 3. Post a participation post.
Week 4:	Strategies for Writing Instruction	1. Create a research-based writing activity. 2. Post a rough draft of your personal essay. 3. Post a participation post.
Week 5:	Radical Revision	1. Complete and discuss the scrambled paragraph activity. 2. Discuss peer review. 3. Post your revision-related feedback to apeer's personal essay.
Week 6:	Editing	1. Complete and discuss an activity involving writing conventions. 2. Evaluate a sample essay using a rubric and discuss the process. 3. Post editing-related feedback to a peer's personal essay.
Week 7:	Writing and Special Populations	1. Discuss writing instruction and special populations. 2. Create a writing lesson plan. 3. Post a participation post.

Week 8:	Presentation and Publication	1. Post a final draft of your personal essay. 2. Post your parting thoughts. 3. Post a participation post. 4. Complete the end-of-course evaluation.

Course Resources:

Participants will access a variety of resources that support writing instruction, including Virginia's adult education standards resources: the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education and the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education.

Student Expectations:

In order to receive a certificate of completion, you must submit all assignments on time. Remember that although you will benefit from doing the activities, you will learn most from discussions with your online colleagues and facilitator(s). To keep discussions as productive as possible, please post and respond within the assigned week. You may refer to the *Syllabus* or the *Calendar* for specific dates. In order to stay on track, be sure to check your weekly progress in the *Grades* section.

Discussion Board Posts:

You will either be writing a thoughtful response to a discussion board prompt, or posting an activity directly to the discussion board. For prompts, write a one- to two paragraph response for each discussion board question. For activities, make sure to follow the directions and include all necessary components. In order to receive full credit for your *peer response post*, your writing should include some details or depth. (Cursory responses such as "I agree with your answer." or "That is a good point." will not receive full credit.) Please be sure to respond to the initial prompt and not a classmate's response for your initial post.

Participants who do not post to the discussion board within the first week will be removed from the course. This will then place you on "waiting list only" status for future online courses and trainings. If you do not post for more than one week at any time during the course or if you fall more than one week behind in your assignments, you may be removed from the course and will be placed on "waiting list only" status for future online courses. If you find that you cannot post for more than two weeks, please contact your technical facilitator at valrccourses@vcu.edu or 1-800-237-0178 as soon as possible to discuss the situation and your further participation in the course. Please refer to the *Acronyms for Adult Education* if you have any questions on terminology.