



## NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

### Rx for Writing

### Workshop Syllabus

#### I. WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

This is a lecture and laboratory workshop designed to train teachers to provide written language intervention in a group setting. Rx for Writing is specifically intended for students in grades 4-12 whose basic written expression skills are below expected standard as determined by a local educational agency.

Rx for Writing will build and strengthen grammar and writing mechanics, semantics, syntax, and composition writing skills with an emphasis on the writing process.

This intervention can happen within three 40-minute, weekly small group sessions or two 60-minute, weekly small group sessions. Students who need to master basic grammar and writing skills will most benefit from this program. Though handwriting and spelling skills are utilized and applied, these skills are not explicitly taught in this intervention.

Students will be challenged to apply their growing understanding of grammar to the creation of sentences, paragraphs, and compositions. Students will be implementing grammar, spelling and usage rules when editing their own written work as well as the written work of others.

Language and higher-level thinking skills will be developed and supported in this interactive, small-group intervention that covers research-based writing content while mediation, Socratic questioning, and the strengthening of cognitive functions will serve as the core methodology. In this dynamic intervention, students' written expression skills will be honed while their thinking and language skills will be strengthened, all within an atmosphere where writing skills are explicitly taught so anxiety and reluctance to write are reduced and thinking is maximized.

The following topics are discussed in the workshop:

- A. **Research** - Neuropsychology of Written Language Disorder; the power of mediation, cognitive functioning abilities related to written expression.

- B. **Philosophy** - Hands-on, brain-based, research-based grammar and writing activities with emphasis on Socratic questioning, theories of group dynamics and cognitive functions.
- C. **Assessment** - Identify specific difficulties with written expression, gather pre/post data using Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement and informal observations.
- D. **Intervention** - Balanced, mediated application of written language activities and techniques addressing:
  - 1. Grammar Skills
  - 2. Sentence construction and combination skills
  - 3. Composition and editing strategies

## II. WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

- A. **GENERAL:** Successful completion of this workshop will enable the participant to better understand student needs in written expression based on the subtypes of written language disorders and understand how to strengthen grammar, writing mechanics, semantics, syntax and composition skills while also while learning how to utilize the group model for Rx for Writing to inspire reluctant and struggling writers to enjoy the writing process and the ability to communicate their own ideas in written form.
- B. **SPECIFIC:** Upon completion of this workshop, the participant will be able to:
  - 1. Acquire an understanding of the characteristics of students who struggle with written language disorders.
  - 2. Articulate how the components of written language; handwriting, spelling and composition of thought processes, are related.
  - 3. Design a writing intervention plan and implement techniques that meet the specific needs of a group of struggling writers for grades 4-12.
  - 4. Communicate and implement the theories of learning in a group setting.

## III. WORKSHOP RESOURCES

### A. REQUIRED:

- 1. *Rx for Writing* Training Manual (digitally provided by NILD Canada).
- 2. [\*NILD Grammar Notebook\*](#)
- 3. [\*Easy Grammar Plus\*](#) Revised 2007 Teacher Edition by Wanda C. Phillips
- 4. [\*Teaching Students with Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, OWL LD, and Dyscalculia\*](#) by Virginia Berninger & Beverly J. Wolf

## **B. OPTIONAL MATERIALS:**

1. [\*Getting A Grip\*](#) by Kathleen R. Hopkins
2. [\*Daily Grams, Grade 7\*](#) by Wanda C. Phillips
3. [\*Craft Lessons Second Edition: Teaching Writing K-8\*](#) by Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi

## **IV. WORKSHOP REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. PREREQUISITE:** None

### **B. PRE-WORKSHOP PREPARATION (approximately 90 minutes):**

1. Read Chapters 1,2, and 5 from *Teaching Students with Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, OWL LD, and Dyscalculia* by Virginia Berninger & Beverly J. Wolf.
2. Familiarize yourself with *Easy Grammar Plus Revised 2007 Teacher Edition* by Wanda C. Phillips
3. Read five articles.
4. Watch one asynchronous lecture.

### **C. WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES:**

1. Acquire an understanding of the characteristics of students who struggle with written language disorders.
2. Articulate how the components of written language are related: handwriting, spelling, and composition of thought.
3. Learn research-based intervention techniques to teach grammar, syntax, semantics, and the writing process to improve written expression skills in struggling writers.
4. Demonstrate written expression techniques with peers in a small group setting and implement strategies for motivating reluctant writers.

## **V. WORKSHOP WORKLOAD**

Asynchronous learning – time required is approximately 7 hours

Synchronous learning – time required is 8 hours

## **VI. WORKSHOP EVALUATION**

Participants will practice the writing intervention techniques with a small group and receive feedback on their demonstrations. Proficiency with grammar, semantics, syntax, and teaching the writing process and the ability to articulate their importance will be assessed.

## **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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