Literacy and Numeracy for NCEA Level 1 - Writing

Revising and editing a persuasive text

Content

This resource supports the teaching and learning of revising and editing a draft persuasive text within the broader context of planning, composing, revising and editing. The sequence is suitable for learners in any context which requires writing a persuasive text and also where tutors are gathering naturally occurring evidence for the achievement of the NCEA Level 1 Literacy Unit Standard 26622.

Alignment

The content aligns with steps 3 to 4 of the Write to Communicate strand of the Adult Learning Progressions and is designed to transition learners towards step 5.

Intent

The intent of this resource is to provide learners with a process for revising and editing their draft persuasive text.

Sequence

There are three parts to this sequence. Learners will:

1. identify arguments that can be improved
2. add additional information
3. edit phrases and words.

The process of writing

Writing is a process that consists of separate stages of planning, composing, revising and editing. This sequence is designed to support learners to *compose* a persuasive text. A persuasive text is a piece of writing that attempts to persuade the reader to think, feel or act in a certain way. The ability to construct such texts is considered important for adults to participate fully in society.

1. Identify arguments that can be improved

Step one: Discuss with learners what the difference is between a good argument and a bad one. Encourage them to share ideas.

A good argument is supported by a number of evidence-based statements. The quality of an argument depends on how well each piece of evidence supports the argument, *and* how reliable the supporting evidence is.

For example, of the two statements below, one is based on an opinion and the other is based on evidence. A strong argument will provide evidence, not opinion.

Weak argument:	I believe that people under 20 are good drivers. I am under 20 and I am a good driver.
Strong argument:	I believe that people under 20 are good drivers. Statistics show that males between the age of 19 and 25 have more accidents than all people under 20 combined.

Step two: Have learners read their first draft from Composing a persuasive text and identify any statements that have no (or weak) supporting evidence.

For example:

Text	Weak or strong arguments
There is a lot of discussion about whether the age at which a person can gain a driver licence should be raised from 16 to 18.	No evidence provided. (Weak) Might be good to cite an example of people talking about this topic, such as a recent newspaper article that received 1000s of online comments.
Another counter argument is that focusing on the bad behaviours of some young people is unfair to those who are good drivers and unfair to their families. In farming communities, it is very useful to have young people able to drive, as they can help with the work. These young people show that young people can be mature and responsible.	No evidence provided on the number of young people unable to support their families because they cannot gain a licence. (Weak) Need to find evidence of how many young people use their driving ability to help their employees or parents.

Step three: Have learners add at least one sentence to each of their arguments to provide evidence.

For example:

There is a lot of discussion about whether the age at which a person can gain a driver licence should be raised from 16 to the age of 18. *This was evident from the large number of comments a recent NZ Herald online article received.*

2. Add additional information

Persuasive texts are more interesting if examples are given to illustrate points.

Step one: Ask learners to select a key point from their draft that can be illustrated with an example. Examples can be brief stories, anecdotes or descriptions.

For example:

Another counter argument is that focusing on the bad behaviours of some young people is unfair to those who are good drivers and unfair to their families. In farming communities, it is very useful to have young people able to drive, as they can help with the work. These young people show that young people can be mature and responsible. *For example, a farmer nearby relies on his 16-year-old son to drive a tractor in the harvest season. His daughter is 15 years old and a great tractor driver, but she is not able to help because it is illegal for her to drive the 2-kilometer stretch of public road between paddocks.*

Step two: Have learners write the example into their drafts. Less skilled writers may need some tutor or peers support.

2. Edit phrases and words

The second part of the revising and editing process could be to look at improving words or phrases. Learners may be inexperienced in using connectives and signal words that have a more formal tone. The table below can be used to support learners.

Step one: Have learners work through their drafts and select alternative words from the table where appropriate.

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Introduction	the topic, issue, study area, this report my purpose, questions, area of interest, hypothesis
Describing procedures or time sequences	the first step, to begin with, initially, before, at this point secondly, subsequently, following this step, next, then, another when, meanwhile, after that, after a while, later, finally, consequently
Giving examples	for example, for instance, including, such as, another reason, another example, can be illustrated by, as follows
Comparing	both ... and ..., similarly, in most cases, not only ... but also ... more, most, less, least, less than, more than
Contrasting	but, however, on the other hand, in contrast to, whereas, alternatively, is different from, differs from, on the contrary, although, yet, nevertheless, despite this
Adding information	also, as well as, another point, another factor, another reason, in addition, additionally, besides, furthermore, moreover
Interpreting data	as can be seen by, according to, as shown in, evidence indicates, as exemplified by, as a result of
Conclusion	in conclusion, thus, therefore, for these reasons, these points lead to, as a result, the results indicate, accordingly, to summarise

Fig. 1: Useful connectives and signal words from Teaching Adults to Write to Communicate, p. 74

Step three: Encourage learners to keep a notebook of terms, phrases and words they hear or read, which they think will be useful for future reference. As in the table above, they might group these words.

During this stage encourage learners to use a dictionary and/or thesaurus to check their writing for any spelling mistakes and look for synonyms of words to improve their choice of words.

Step four: This entire process can be modelled by the tutor to the whole class. The Appendix on p. 6 is a learner's first draft of an argument. It can be displayed on the whiteboard and the tutor can model the process of revising and editing, while input from the learners can be encouraged.

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Appendix: Example of First Draft

Why the driving age should not be raised to 18

There is a lot of discussion about whether the drivers age should be raised to 18. The people who agree with this idea, such as the New Zealand Police, claim that young people have more accidents than older people. They also argue that young people are easily pressured into dangerous activities as a way of looking cool. A further point they make is that young people think less about their actions.

However, there are also strong arguments against this point of view. I believe that most young people are good drivers. A counter argument is that teenagers are not the worse drivers, male drivers under the age of 25 are. Maybe we should ban males under 25 from driving?

Another counter argument is that focusing on the bad behaviours of some young people is unfair to those who are good drivers and unfair to their families. In farming communities, it is very useful to have young people able to drive, as they can help with the work. These young people show that young people can be mature and responsible.

After looking at the different points of view and the evidence for them I think that raising the driving age to 18 is a wrong because it is unfair to young adults who are good drivers. It also sends a message to young adults that society doesn't trust them.