



## Writing Research

“What We Know About Writing” is a brochure published by The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) which summarizes the latest research on how students in grades 6-8 learn to write well. Because the skill levels of so many ABE students fall into the 6-8 grade level range, the NCTE findings have strong implications for the ABE classroom.

### Key Concepts

- Students’ life experiences and existing skills offer a foundation for writing.
  - Skills are sharpened when students are challenged to write frequently for meaningful purposes.
  - The development of student writing is best achieved through substantial time devoted to writing, with multiple opportunities to write throughout the school day in different content areas.
  - Language conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling) are most successfully learned through lessons that target problem areas in the students’ own writing.
  - Writing development is tied to reading development; writers grow in their writing ability through being immersed in opportunities to read, write, and look closely at the work of others.
  - “Writing to think” is an important, and often overlooked, role of writing. Using writing as a tool of exploration can help students achieve in other content areas such as science, math, and social studies.
  - Assessment that benefits students and teachers is embedded within the curriculum and is represented by collections of key pieces of writing created over time (i.e. student portfolio).
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“Research in Writing: Implications for Adult Literacy Education” Marilyn Gillespie, 2001.

### Key Concepts

- May have had few opportunities to write for their own purposes – to “make words their own.”
- May have a mental model of writing that is different from that of their teachers (e.g.: a “good” writer is someone who knows how to use punctuation and to spell correctly).
- May not be familiar with the “language” of academic writing.
- Often function quite well using written language in their everyday lives.
- Will probably be required to do some form of writing in the workplace.