

What's out there

10 Radical ideas for reluctant writers by Lee Kindler

Reviewed by Jennett Colyer and Linno Rhodes

How could you go wrong with a title like this? Added to which is the promise of 'ten immediate, accessible and inspiring writing activities for students who may not feel comfortable getting their ideas out there'. This new book contains hands-on activities that encourage students to take the plunge into writing. There are notes for teachers that explain the features of different text types, where to find examples, and ideas for classroom activities. Activities are supported by free online materials that include infographics, videos, links, maps and game source files that students can use to gain a deeper understanding of each text.

Jennett has been using this resource with her VCAL class at Glenroy Neighbourhood Learning Centre (GNLC). She has found the resource really easy to use and full of some great ideas:

My VCAL students have such a range of learning preferences that it can be hard to get them to do the same thing. This book appeals to all of them because the activities are so creative and hands-on. So they might be writing something of their own, but do it by cutting up words or making a meme. It is written in language they are used to.

For someone who may not be all that tech savvy, the book explains different media and writing styles in an engaging way. Linno has used it with a mixed group of learners of different ages and backgrounds:

This is the perfect resource for me as it explains 'techy things' in an easy to understand way—memes? QR readers? Twitter? I understand them all now. The

hands-on method suits the learners, but also serves to illustrate to teachers how to do the suggested activities. They are all fun and importantly, easy to carry out in the classroom.

Even older learners who are not digital natives, will enjoy these activities, especially making photo stories and using the William Burroughs' cut up method of writing.

Jennett was enthusiastic about the format of the book and how the students could quickly access the online support materials:

I am across it! It is a great book for the VCAL classroom and for teachers who have run out of ideas. I like the use of digital techniques, such as allowing students to use a QR reader. This is an app that allows you to read a barcode which then takes you to a webpage. It's really another way of clicking a link to access learning activities but really quick and easy. The ideas are fresh and innovative. I have used the photo story suggestions to have my students create a photo story on shapes in the community that worked really well.

10 Radical Ideas for Reluctant Writers by Lee Kindler is published by Multifangled. It is available at http://multifangled.com.au/wp/?page_id=70.

Jennett Colyer is the VCAL Coordinator and teacher at GNLC. Linno Rhodes is the LLN Coordinator and teacher at GNLC.

