# READER'S GUIDE

**This guide is designed to enrich your reading of the articles in this issue. You may choose to read them on your own, taking notes or jotting down answers to the discussion questions below. Or you may use the guide to explore the articles with colleagues.**

For example, many teachers discuss *Forum* at regularly scheduled meetings with department colleagues and members of teachers' groups, or in teacher-training courses and workshops. Often, teachers choose an article for their group to read before the meeting or class, then discuss that article when they meet. Teachers have found it helpful to take notes on articles or write a response to an article and bring that response to share in a discussion group. Another idea is for teachers to try a selected activity or technique described in one of the articles, then report back to the group on their experiences and discuss positives, negatives, and possible adaptations for their teaching context.

## Using Models in the Second-Language Writing Classroom (Pages 2–13)

### Pre-Reading

1. Do you give students "model texts" when you make writing assignments?

   1a. If so, what benefits do you see? List at least two:

   _____

   _____

   1b. If not, what are your reasons? List at least two:

   _____

   _____

2. If you wanted to find models for the kinds of writing you assign, do you know where you could look? Where would you look first? Second? Third?
3. How do you decide whether a model you have will be appropriate for your students and the assignment you are giving them? What process do you use to decide? What criteria do you use to make your decision?
4. Think of a time when you used a model for your own writing. In what ways did using the model help you? In what ways did it *not* help you meet your writing goals?

### Post-Reading

1. How can you make your students understand that they should not simply copy the writing models you give them? What will you say or do to communicate this idea effectively? What will you ask your students to do?
2. The author provides a number of sample model texts. Choose one that is appropriate for your students and for an assignment you are giving, and use the model in your class. What are the results? What factors influence whether the use of a model is effective or not?
3. The author provides a list of key points on pages 12 and 13. Do you agree with each of these points? Which point(s) do you already incorporate in your use of models? How can you incorporate the point(s) you do not yet incorporate?
4. Think about a model that you have used when teaching writing. On the basis of the points raised in this article, evaluate that model. Does it serve the purpose you want it to serve? What strengths does it have? What weaknesses, if any, do you see in the model?

5. Try writing a model for a writing assignment you give. (Remember that a model can be given to students at different points in the writing process and that models can be used for different purposes.) Use the model in your class. What are the results? How difficult or easy was it for you to write the model? How might you edit it if you want to use it again?

6. What are some reasons that you might want to use a model that has "imperfections"—or that is an example of weak writing—in a writing class?

## "To Build a Fire": Creative Frames, Adolescent Readers, and New Words (Pages 14–23)

### Pre-Reading

1. Have you ever read the story "To Build a Fire," written by Jack London? If so, what do you remember about it? Have you ever taught the story to students? If so, what approach did you use in your teaching?

2. Do you remember the context or situation in which you learned certain words in a language you were learning? Think of an example. How does the context reinforce your understanding and retention of the word and its meaning?

3. When you were learning a language (English or another language) in school, how was vocabulary taught? Describe the process as you remember it.

4. If you come across new words now, how do you attempt to learn what they mean? How do you attempt to remember them? Is this the same process you used to learn vocabulary as a student in school? If not, what is different?

5. If you assign a short story to your students and you know that some of the vocabulary in the story will be challenging, how do you prepare your students for the challenge of learning that vocabulary? How do you help your students understand new and important vocabulary in the stories they read?

### Post-Reading

1. Explain in your own words how learners make use of interactive student notebooks (ISNs). How is this practice similar to or different from the approach you and your students usually use when learning vocabulary? Select a short text, explain the process to your students, and have them work together to create an anchor list of targeted vocabulary from the text. Afterward, evaluate the process. And—what strategy will you use as a follow-up to reinforce your students' comprehension and retention of that vocabulary?

2. The authors acknowledge (on page 16) that for many teachers, "space, time, and resources are short." Even if you have these limitations in your teaching situation, what are some ways you can use the strategies suggested in this article? For example, could you have multiple Word Wheels in action at the same time? In your teaching, are you able to meet with students outside the classroom, in a different space or at another time?

3. It's easy to tell yourself that new ideas, such as the ones presented in the article, are not practical for your classroom; it's challenging but potentially rewarding to try them and see what the possibilities are. Challenge yourself—perhaps with colleagues—to try one of the ideas in the article. It might help to use a short story or other text that you have taught before so that you have a strong sense of the vocabulary that is essential and that might be unfamiliar to your students. Choose one of the "physical" strategies described in the article, describe and/or demonstrate it to your students, and let them try it. Afterward, give them a chance to discuss the experience, to share how they felt—and to make their own suggestions about how the activity might be adapted. Commit to trying the strategy more than one time!

4. The authors point out that the study of vocabulary doesn't need to be limited to the understanding of individual words, and they make suggestions for focusing on key phrases and sentences. Choose a text that you teach in your curriculum and select several key sentences. Use the Corridor of Words, Living Word Walls, or another strategy and let your students interact with one or more of the sentences. Afterward, discuss the experience with them. You might ask them, "How did the activity change or enhance your understanding of the sentence(s)?" Don't forget to answer the same question yourself!