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THE FIRST ENGLISH LANGUAGE FACULTY

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY

Abdullaeva Zaxro

Developing speaking skills through organizing effective discussion and debating classes

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QUALIFICATION PAPER

"THE QUALIFICATION PAPER IS ADMITTED TO DEFENCE"	**SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS:**
Head of the Department of English Phonetics and phonology	_____Ibragimov N
_____M.Chutpulatov	"____" _____2016
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INTRODUCTION

"Language is the spirit of nation. We should take care of it, as we learn about our culture and moral value by means of it" I.A. Karimov.[1]

During independence years, more than 200 laws, decrees and other legislative documents were issued on the protection of social, economic, legal, political, medical, spiritual and educational interests of the youth. For the purpose of further development of learning foreign languages, improving the level and quality of highly trained professional teachers for secondary schools, professional college and academic lyceums, and higher educational institutions, another new Decree № 1971 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan I. Karimov on May 23, 2013 "On Measures to Improve the Activity of Uzbekistan State University of World Languages" was issued.

Writing plays an important role in our personal and professional lives, thus, it has become one of the essential components in university English for General Purposes (EGP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) curricula. Its multifarious pedagogical purposes range from reinforcement, training and imitation (generally in the early stages of instruction) to communication, fluency and learning (at intermediate and more advanced levels).[2]Essentially, writing is considered a problem-solving activity in which the writer faces two main tasks: generating ideas and composing them into a structure adapted to the needs of the reader and the goals of the writer, with adequacy to the context of situation.

This Qualification paper is devoted to theme "The importance of preparing writing tasks in EFL classes".

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[1] Каримов И. Духовно-нравственные устои развития независимого Узбекистана. – Т.: Узбекистон, 1996. – С.187.
[2]Raimes A. ¨Out of the woods: emerging traditions in the teaching of writing¨. In S. Silberstein (ed.) State of the Art TESOL Essays.TESOL Inc., 1993. P.57

The actuality of the Qualification Paper is in the detailed analysis of the scientific works of some linguists as Hyland, Harmer and in methodological approach to designing writing tasks.

The Subject Matter of the Qualification Paper is writing tasks.

The object of the research is the investigation of writing tasks through prism ofdesigning and methodology.

The main aim of the Qualification Paper is to establish specific character of designing writing tasks and ways of teaching writing in the ESL classes.

The following **tasks**were put forward:

- to study exist literature connected withwriting in the English language;

- to investigate thoroughlywriting task types;

- to consider designing genre-based communicative tasks

- to consider process-oriented and product-oriented approaches to the teaching writing;

- to provide methodological recommendations for teaching writing.

The methods of the researchare the descriptive analysis, the method of lexicographical analysis and lexical definitions.

Methodological base of research is Decrees of the President of Republic of Uzbekistan about development of languages, educations and sciences, the National program on a professional training, and also basic researches in the field of the theory of linguistics.

The **novelty** of this qualification paper is defined by concrete research results of designing writing tasks and specific peculiarities of teaching them.

The theoretical value of the Qualification Paper is in the analytical approach to the theme pointing out the difficulties indesigning writing tasks,approaches to teaching them.

The practical value of the Qualification Paper is explained by the possibility to use the results and conclusionsinteaching writing to ESL students. Materials of the paper can be used in English classes at school, lyceums and in the other educational institutions.

The structure of the Qualification Paperincludes Introduction, 3 chapters, Conclusion, and The list of the used literature.

Introduction deals with the description of the Qualification Paper.

Chapter One deals with the general information about CEFR, it describes types of writing tasks and provides with approaches to writing assessment.

Chapter Two deals with designing writing tasks, including different approaches.

Chapter Three deals with the peculiarities of teaching writing to ESL students. It includes process-based and product-oriented approaches to teaching writing.

Conclusion deals with the theoretical and practical results of the Qualification Paper.

The list of the used literature covers the list of literature used in this Qualification Paper.

CHAPTER I. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF RESEARCH

1.1. CEFR requirements

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (CEFR) defines levels of language proficiency in Speaking, Reading, Writing and Listening and provides the basis for many language syllabuses and curricula around the world. Language ability is described across a 6 level scale from A1 for beginners up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. As well as common reference levels, the CEFR provides a 'Descriptive Scheme' of definitions, categories and examples that language professionals can use to better understand and communicate their aims and objectives. The examples given are called 'illustrative descriptors' and are presented as a series of scales with Can Do statements.[3]

The CEFR describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. The description covers the cultural context in which language is set. The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. Hence, the Framework enhances the transparency of courses, syllabuses and qualifications, thereby promoting international co-operation in the field of modern languages.

Since 2001 alignment exercises and standard-setting studies have been carried out in line with the recommendations made in the extensive supporting documentation produced by the Council of Europe. These studies have led to international symposia hosted by ALTE, case study conferences, reports, publications and presentation of academic papers at international conferences.

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[3]University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, Using the CEFR: Principles of Good Practice, October 2011: http://www.cambridgeenglish.org/images/126011-using-cefr-principles-of-good-practice.pdf.p.87

The CEFR provides a useful frame of reference for locating language examinations within a commonly accepted system of levels which can be used to help organisations select examinations which meet their language testing requirements. It allows governments and ministries to compare standards in their own countries with those of students around the world and is often used by policy-makers in the framing of language policy and to set minimum language requirements for a wide range of purposes. It is also widely used in the design of curricula and syllabuses and many other contexts. Although comprehensive in many ways the CEFR also has limitations. This was recognised by the authors of the CEFR who suggested that users of the Framework would need to adapt it in various ways to meet specific requirements in their own contexts.[4]

Although the Common European Framework applies to European languages, it has also been adopted by curriculum developers, publishers, examination providers and Ministries of Education around the world. [5]

Cambridge English has worked with these types of organisation to develop alignment claims to the CEFR within their own educational contexts. In many cases Cambridge English tests or assessment services have been used as benchmarks to provide the link to the international standards. For example, projects of this kind have been carried out with Beijing's Municipal Government, with the State Government of Gujarat, and with Ministries of Education in Taiwan, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Italy and France.

	Listening	Reading	Writing
A1	Can understand basic instructions or take part in a	Can understand basic notices, instructions or	Can complete basic forms, and write notes including

[4] Jones, N and Saville, N. European Language Policy: Assessment, Learning and the CEFR, Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 29, 2009, P. 51–63.
[5] North, B. The Common European Framework of Reference: Development, Theoretical and Practical Issues, paper presented at the symposium A New Direction in Foreign Language Education: The Potential of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Osaka University of Foreign Studies, Japan, March 2006.p.48

	Listening	Reading	Writing
	basic factual conversation on a predictable topic.	information.	times, dates and places.
A2	Can express simple opinions or requirements in a familiar context.	Can understand straightforward information within a known area, such as on products and signs and simple textbooks or reports on familiar matters.	Can complete forms and write short simple letters or postcards related to personal information.
B1	Can express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area, and understand instructions or public announcements.	Can understand routine information and articles, and the general meaning of non-routine information within a familiar area.	Can write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters.
B2	Can follow or give a talk on a familiar topic or keep up a conversation on a fairly wide range of topics.	Can scan texts for relevant information, and understand detailed instructions or advice.	Can make notes while someone is talking or write a letter including non-standard requests.
C1	Can contribute effectively to meetings and seminars within own area of work or keep up a casual conversation with a good degree of fluency, coping with abstract expressions.	Can read quickly enough to cope with an academic course, to read the media for information or to understand non-standard correspondence.	Can prepare/draft professional correspondence, take reasonably accurate notes in meetings or write an essay which shows an ability to communicate.
C2	Can advise on or talk about complex or sensitive issues, understanding colloquial references and dealing confidently with hostile	Can understand documents, correspondence and reports, including the finer points of complex texts.	Can write letters on any subject and full notes of meetings or seminars with good expression and accuracy.

Listening	Reading	Writing
questions.		

These 'can do' statements were developed by ALTE (The Association of Language Testers in Europe) of which Cambridge English Language Assessment is a founding member.

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1.2. Types of writing tasks

Writing tasks in general have been a focus of various studies (for example, Harmer and Hedge). In order to find out what EFL writing teaching is like in Finland, the function of writing tasks should be studied. The functions of writing tasks have beenanalyzed by Hyland and Kern since their categories suit the present study well. Together they provide a view into the function and the purpose of writing tasks.

Hyland[6] states that tasks are fundamental in learning to write. According to him, tasks help students to develop an understanding of texts and writing skills. Even though texts are important as writing materials, the tasks students actually do by themselves are even more significant in teaching writing.

According to Hyland thereare five different skillsof the studentto write effective texts: content, system, process, genre, and context. The learners needtoknowtheareaofinvestigationto write about and what to include in apieceofwriting(content), knowledge of the language forms he or she needs in order to deliver a message (system), knowledge of revising and drafting (process), knowledge of communicative purposes (genre) and knowledge of reader's expectations (context). Hyland[7]categorizes writing tasks according to the areas of skills they are designed to improve.

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[6]Hyland, K. Second language writing.Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.2003. P.112
[7]Hyland, K. Second language writing.Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.2003. P.114-115

In addition, Hyland divides writing tasks in two different categories. Real-world tasks are tasks that are based on communicative goals and delivering a message. On theother hand, pedagogic tasks focus on developing the pupil's composing skills or genre knowledge. Hyland emphasizes that the tasks should be based on the text the student needs to write and the student should be able to see the link between pedagogic tasks and real world tasks.

Kern introduces the most common types of writing activities used in foreign language classrooms. Kern [8]places the task types on a continuum, one end representing tasks that emphasize formal writing and the form of a language, and the other end representing tasks that emphasize the content and ideas of the text. The task types categorized from form-focused to content-focused are:

-copying and dictation,

-grammar exercises,

-controlled composition,

-translation,

-analytical essays,

-creative writing,

-letter writing (includes email, and computer conferencing),

-journal writing

-note taking

-free writing.

According to Kern, the tasks that beginners tend to get to practice can be found on the left end of the continuum and tasks that are more creative can be completed with structured instructions. Each category has its own demands on students' language proficiency.

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[8]Kern, R. Literacy and language teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2002. P.191-192

According to Kern copying, dictation and grammar exercises, as well as controlled composition, focus on grammar, vocabulary and the mechanics of writing.

Analytical essays involve various elements, among them knowledge of genres. Creative writing gives students the possibility to express emotions and play with language. In early stages of language learning, it is important to give the students constraints to make the tasksless demanding. Letter writing tasks have a communicative goal and are therefore motivational writing tasks. Kern suggests that real pen pals can evensupport cultural enrichment. In addition, letter writing includes various functions for language use. For instance, greeting, asking questions, explaining, expressing agreement or disagreement, and clarifying. According to Kern, journal writing is a tool for the students to write about their daily encounters and reflect on their learning. Free writing is a writing task in which the students are asked to write about a topic without stopping to think about new ideas and not to worry about the forms.

The categorizations introduced above are general level classifications of writing tasks and applicable in the Finnish school environment. Kern's categorization focuses on the writing tasks' relations to the use of English writing skills outside classroomcontext, whereas Hyland's[9] categorization is based on the writing skills the tasks are designed to develop. Both these views on writing tasks are stressed in the present study.

The first category on Kern's continuum is **copying** and **dictation**, which is the most form-focused type of writing tasks. The second category is **grammar and controlled composition**.The writing tasks were considered controlled composition tasks if the instructions gave specific rules for the form of the written piece. The instructions in this category guided the pupil to use

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[9]Hyland, F. The impact of teacher written feedback on individual writers.Journal of Second Language Writing, 7(3). 1998. P.113

certain structures and expressions in the written piece. The third form-focused group was **translation tasks**.

Analytical essayisone of the two largest categories. Writing tasks that required describing and analyzing some phenomenon or subject analytically are recognized into this category. Since the writing tasks in the ninth grade are relatively short, they could not be recognized as essays in the academic sense. The focus in this category was on the purpose of the writing tasks, which was to analyze certain objects and write about them analytically. Typical instructions for the writing tasks in this category were, for example, "describe your own school history and analyze the Uzbek school system" and "in whatsituations is the work of a citizen journalist particularly important".

The other of the two largest categories are **creative writing**. Such tasks give the writer freedom in expressing their thoughts more than any other type of writing tasks. In creative writing tasks, the instructions does not provide details about what the written piece should be like, excepta subject and perhaps a genre that the written piece should be about. The instructions in this category were quite versatile, for example, "what do you think about…", "write a story about…", and "create an advertisement". The instructions for these two tasks were quite detailed with structured steps for how to write an email, for example, "start with a greeting", "introduce yourself", "express your interest in…", and "finish your message politely".

One more type of writing task is **notetaking**. It requires searching for information about a subject and about interviewing a classmate and taking notes. There are also types about **writing descriptions** for certain terms, like, "Write explanations for the following words in English: granny, weekend, hangover, memory". The other group is**lists**; they instruct the pupil to make a list of certain things. A list is considered as a writing task, since the points on a list are somehow connected together and quite many of these tasks require whole sentences.

1.3. Approaches to writing assessment

The most important in preparing writing tasks is assessment.The first step in test design is for teachers to identify which broad approach to writing best identifies their chosen type of assessment: direct or indirect. **Indirect writing assessment** measures correct usage in sentence level constructions and focuses on spelling and punctuation via objective formats like MCQs and cloze tests. These measures are supposed to determine a student's knowledge of writing sub skills such as grammar and sentence construction which are assumed to constitute components of writing ability. Indirect writing assessment measures are largely concerned with accuracy rather than communication.

Direct writing assessment measures a student's ability to communicate through the written mode based on the production of written texts. This type of writing assessment requires the student to come up with the content, find a way to organize the ideas, and use appropriate vocabulary, grammatical conventions and syntax. Direct writing assessment integrates all elements of writing. The choice of one approach over another should inform all subsequent choices in assessment design.

According to Hyland, the design of good writing assessment tests and tasks involves four basic elements: rubric; prompt; expected response; and post-task evaluation. In addition, topic restriction should be considered here.

Rubric.The rubric is the instructions for carrying out the writing task. One of the problems for the test writer is to decide what should be covered in the rubric. A good rubric should include information such as the procedures for responding, the task format, timeallowed for completion of thetask, and information about how the task will be evaluated. The information in the rubric should come from the test specification, which provides the test writer with details on the topic, the rhetorical pattern to be tested, the intended audience,

how much information should be included in the rubric, the number of words the student is expected to produce, and overall weighting.[10] Good rubrics should:

• Specify a specificrhetorical pattern, length of writing desired and amount of time allowed to complete the task;

• Indicate the resources student will have available at their disposal (dictionaries, spell/grammar check) and what method of delivery the assessment will take (i.e. paper and pencil, laptop);

• Indicatewhatformofessayisneeded: a draft or an outline;

• Include the overall weighting of the writing task as compared to other parts of the exam.

Topic	Related to the theme of Travel
Text Type	Compare/contrast
Length	250 words
Areas to be assessed	Content, organization, vocabulary, language use, mechanics
Timing	30 minutes
Weighting	10% of midterm exam grade
Pass level	Similar to IELTS band 5.5

Figure 1: Sample Writing Test Specification

Writing prompt.Hyland defines the prompt as "the stimulus the student must respond to" [11]. Kroll and Reid[12]identify three main prompt formats: base, framed and text-based. The first two are the most common in F/SL writing assessment. Base prompts state the entire task in direct and very simple terms: for example, *"Many say that "money is the root of all evil." Do you agree or*

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[10]Lloyd D., Davidson P., & C. Coombe (Eds.), The fundamentals of language assessment: A practical guide for teachers in the Gulf. Dubai, UAE:TESOL Arabia Publications. 2005.p.182

[11]Hyland, F.The impact of teacher written feedback on individual writers. Journal of Second Language Writing, 7(3): 1998. p. 221

[12]Kroll, B., & Reid, J. (1994). Guidelines for designing writing prompts: Clarifications, caveats and cautions. Journal of Second Language Writing, 3(3).1994, p. 233

*disagree with this statement?"*Framed prompts present the writer with a situation that acts as a frame for the interpretation of the task:

On a recent flight back home to the UAE, the Airline lost your baggage. Write a complaint letter to Mr. Al-Ahli, the General Manager, telling him about your problem. Be sure to include the following:...

Textbased prompts provide writers with a text to which they must respond in their writing.

You have been put in charge of selecting an appropriate restaurant for your senior class party. Use the restaurant reviews below to select an appropriate venue and then write an invitation letter to your fellow classmates persuading them to join you there.

A writing prompt, irrespective of its format, defines the writing task for students. It consists of a question or a statement that students will address in their writing and the conditions under which they will be asked to write. Inordertodevelop a good writing prompt an appropriate 'signpost' termshouldbe used, such as describe, discuss, explain, compare, outline, evaluate, sothatrequiredrhetorical patternwill be used. Each prompt should meet the following criteria:

- generate the desired type of writing, genre or rhetorical pattern;
- get students involved in thinking and problem-solving;
- be accessible, interesting and challenging to students;
- address topics that are meaningful, relevant, and motivating;
- not require specialist background knowledge;
- use appropriate signpost verbs;
- be fair and provide equal opportunities for all students to respond
- be clear, authentic, focused and unambiguous;
- specify an audience, a purpose, and a context.[13]

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[13]D. Lloyd, P., Davidson, & C. Coombe (Eds.), The fundamentals of language assessment: A practical guide for teachers in the Gulf. Dubai, UAE:TESOL Arabia Publications. 2005.p.127

Expected response is a description of what the teacher intends students to do with the writing task. Before designing a writing task, a designer should clearly havea pictureof the result of writer.

Post task evaluation.Theeffectiveness of writing task isalsoassessed, thus, good writing tasks are likely to givepositive responses to the following questions:

• Did the prompt discriminate well among my students?

• Were the essays easy to read and evaluate?

• Were students able to write to their potential and show what they knew?

Topic restriction. This is in addition to the four aspects of test design described above. Topic restriction is a controversial and often heated issue in writing assessment, soitistheframe, within which learners should produce thei r piece of writing, not going out of topic.

When learners have the opportunity to choose the prompt from different alternative topics, they produce writing task better. They choose the topic which they like and have idea about. In the same way, they can ignore the topics they do not understand or not interested about. In this regard, the students anxiety will be reduced and performing results will be higher.

On the other hand, designer sometimes finds it difficult to create writing tasks on different topics with the same level of difficulty. Moreover, it is easier to check works written on one topic, as marker's attention is not discharged by the variety of topics.

It is the general consensus within the language testing community that all students should write on the topic and preferably on more than one topic. Research results, however, are mixed on whether students write better with single or with multiple prompts.[14] It is thought that the performance of students

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[14]Hamp-Lyons, L. Second language writing: Assessment issues. In B. Kroll (Ed.), Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom(pp. 69-87) New York, USA: Cambridge University Press. 1990.p.174

who are given multiple prompts may be less than expected because students often waste time selecting a topic instead of spending that time writing. If it is decided to allow students to select a topic from a variety of alternatives, alternative topics should be of the same genre and rhetorical pattern. This practice will make it easier to achieve inter-rater reliability.

Ways to Assess Writing

The assessment of writing can range from the personalized, holistic and developmental on the one hand to carefully quantified and summative on the other hand.

Self assessment. There are two self-assessment techniques than can be used in writing assessment: dialog journals and learning logs. Dialog journals require students to regularly make entries addressed to the teacher on topics of their choice. The teacher then writes back, modeling appropriate language use but not correcting the student's language. Dialog journals can be in a paperor electronic format. Students typically write in class for a five to ten minute period either at the beginning or end of the class. If ateacherwants to use dialog journals in the classes, it is advisedto make sure that students language accuracy is not assessed. Instead, Peyton and Reed recommend assessment of students on areas like topic initiation, elaboration,variety, and use of different genres, expressions of interests and attitudes, and awareness about the writing process.

Peer assessment.Peer Assessment is yet another technique that can be used when assessing writing. Peer assessment involves the students in the evaluation of writing. One of the advantages of peer assessment is that it eases the marking burden on the teacher. Teachersdon'tneed to mark every single piece of student writing, but it is important that students getregular feedback on what they write. Students can use checklists, scoring rubrics or simple questions for peer assessment. The major rationale for peer assessment is

that when students learn to evaluate the work of their peers, they are extending their own learning opportunities.

Portfolio assessment.As far as portfolios are defined in writing assessment, a portfolio is a purposive collection of student writing over time, which shows the stages in the writing processa text has gone through and thus the stages of the writers' growth.

Several well-known testers have put forth lists of characteristics that exemplify good portfolios. For instance, Paulson, Paulson and Meyer[15]believe that portfolios must include student participation in four important areas:

1) the selection of portfolio contents;

2) the guidelines forselection;

3) the criteria for judging merit

4) evidence of student reflection.

The element ofreflection figures prominently in the portfolio assessment experience. When students have reflection as a part of the portfolio process, theyare asked to think about their needs, goals, weaknesses and strengths in language learning. They are also asked to select their best work and to explain why that particular work was beneficial to them. Learner reflection allows students to contributetheir own insights about their learning to the assessment process. Perhaps Santos saysit best, "Without reflection, the portfolio remains 'a folder ofall my papers'.

Responding to Student Writing

Another important aspect of writing marking is providing written feedback to students. This feedback is important as it provides opportunities for students to learn and make improvements to their writing. Probably the most common type of written teacher feedback is handwritten comments on the students' papers. These comments usually occur at the end of the paper or in the

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[15]Paulson, F., Paulson, P., & Meyer, C.What makes a portfolio a portfolio? Educational Leadership, 48,5: 1991 p. 10.

margins. Some teachers like to use correction codes to provide formative feedback to students. These simple correction codes facilitate marking and minimize the amount of 'red ink' on student writings.

Figure 2 is an example of a common correction code used by teachers. Advances in technology provide us with another way of responding to student writing. Electronic feedback is particularly valuable because it can be used to give a combination of handwritten comments and correction codes.   Teachers can easily provide commentary and insert corrections through Microsoft Word's track changes facility and through simple-to-use software programs like Markin[16].

Sp	Spelling
Vt	Verb tense
Ww	Wrong word
Wv	Wrong verb
☺	Nice idea/content!
₪	Switch placement
¶	New paragraph
?	I don't understand

Figure 2: Sample Marking Codes for Writing

Research indicates that teacher written feedback is highly valued by second language writers and many students particularly value feedback on their grammar.[17] Although positive remarks are motivating and highly valued by students, Hyland points out that too much praise or positive commentary early

[16]Markin.Electronic   Editing program.CreativeTechnology.http://www.cict.co.uk/software/markin4/index.htm.2002.p.79
[17] Hyland, K.Second language writing.Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.2003.p.171

on in a writer's development can make students complacent and discourage revision.[18]

Thus, there are different types of written tasks. Designershouldpayattentiontothecomponentsofeachtaskanditsassessment. Inthisregard, assessmentprovidesthemainskeletonofdesigningwritingtask.

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[18]Hyland, K. Second language writing. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2003. p. 187

CHAPTER II. THE IMPORTANCE OF DESIGNING WRITING TASKS

2.1. Main points of designing writing task

In this chapter we will discuss main ideas to consider when designing writing tasks, as well as different approaches to preparing them. Most of us begin the process ofpreparing a writing assignment by deciding what task students will complete. Research on the characteristics of effective writing assignments tells us that as we define this task, we must strive to do the following:

• identify an authentic audience and purpose for the project

• position students as experts in their communication with thataudience

• ask students to interact with (rather than restate) texts and knowledge

• give students choices in their work that support their ownership of the task

The difference between what a teacher says (or believes she has said)and what a student hears can be the difference between success and failure for a writing assignment. That's why an assignment sheet alone is never enough. To ensure that students comprehend the expectations for a writing assignment, we must also do the following:

•   unpack the meaning of the assignment, as described by Jim Burke, by explaining the assignment to create a shared understanding of the activity

• provide model responses and demonstrate how to read andcompose example texts

• share rubrics, checklists, and other resources that highlight therequirements and goals for the assignment

Although the task and the ultimate expectations may be clear, studentsstill need support to do their best work. An effective writing assignment provides additional resources that support and engage students throughout their

writing processes. Designing an assignment involves creating and gathering an entire collection of resources:

• organizational structures and material that scaffold the writingprocess

• multiple opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences

• writing to gather and think through ideas

• resources that address the standard conventions of finished andedited texts

• opportunities and support for peer reading and discussion as well as student-teacher conferencing

While preparing an assignment sheet, designer refers students to the additional supporting resources that they can consult in the process ofworking on thetask. For example, designer points to people and other texts that can offer guidance. Designer might include specific details from different artifacts that students will share with me and with one another during the schedule for that assignment. Designer will also mention additional handouts and resources that will be available at later stages in the assignment, such as graphic organizers and peer editing sheets.

There are 2 main approaches in teaching a writing task: genre approach and the communicative task-based approach, which we willdiscussinthischapterofourQualification Paper. The genre approach (GA) is adopted in a writing syllabus (or a class), a communicative task-based (CTB)[19] approach to the teaching of language (but not just writing) is usually present as the two share common assumptions and practices, and hence overlap each other in many ways.

CTB is a version of CLT (communicative language teaching). With the CTB approach, most learning tasks (reading, speaking, listening, writing, grammar, etc.) are communication-oriented, meaning that they model on some real life (i.e., authentic) communication scenarios (e.g., paying at the cashier,

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[19] or in brief the often called task-based approach (TB)

writing a letter to the editor) and aim at teaching language skills that facilitate communication in such scenarios.

The tasks created in a CTB writing classroom is automatically genre-oriented. In the two task examples supplied above, we can identify that the tasks involved production of texts of the two genres ***a) paying at the cashier*** with a very clear communicative purpose, a rather fixed pattern of flow, and very clear roles played by participants and ***b) the written genre of the letter to the editor***. Because of this, the two approaches (CTB as a general language teaching approach and GA as a writing approach) are mutually inclusive in a writing class. You may say that a CTB approach to a language syllabus tends to subsume a GA approach in the writing lessons. See the diagram on next page to see the relationship between the two:

As GA tends to be situated in a CTB syllabus, which calls for creating communicative tasks for students to complete, a genre-based writing classroom calls for the design of communicative tasks which are associated with some identifiable genres.

A CTB approach to the design of a language syllabus: i.e., language learning = learning how to communicate with others using the target language

Speaking tasks being communicatively→ calls for teaching of relevant speech events (genres)	Writing tasks being communicatively-oriented → calling for teaching of relevant genres	Listening tasks being communicatively-oriented → calls for training students to listen to some identifiable genres, etc. (e.g., a speech, a telephone message)

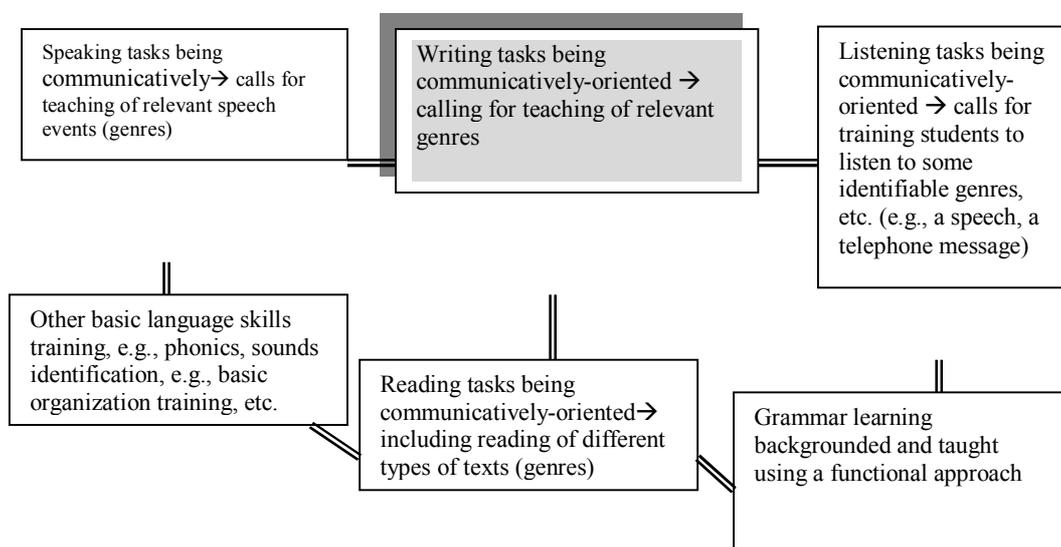| Other basic language skills training, e.g., phonics, sounds identification, e.g., basic organization training, etc.	Reading tasks being communicatively-oriented→ including reading of different types of texts (genres)	Grammar learning backgrounded and taught using a functional approach

Diagram 1: The GA approach situated within a CTB curriculum.

Thus,writing tasks in the foreign language classroom typically fall into one of two possible categories: writing as support skill and writing as main skill. Both are appropriate pedagogical tools, as long as both are included in the lesson plan. When designing a writing task, a teacher should follow these simple steps:

1.   Make sure that your assignment is appropriate for the learners' language level.

2.   Select level-appropriate writing purpose.

3.   Decide on writing as a support skill or as a main skill.

4.   Identify sub-skills students need in order to complete the main task.

5.   Design activity set that prepares sub-skills.

6.   Guide students through pre-, during-, and post-writing activities.

These points are important to consider in order to design more effective writing tasks that:

a.   fulfill the pedagogical purposes of the assignment (e.g., do not say that the task practices narration when all it does is drill the past tense),

b.   reflect pedagogically sound practices (e.g., the process approach to writing, effective feedback, etc.),

c.   can be successfully completed by the students (i.e., the sub-skills that they need have been reviewed and/or learned), and

d.   have a meaningful learning outcome (e.g., help students learn something they can actually use, either to support another skill area or to communicate in plausible/authentic L2 situations).

A good writing assignment

- Evokes the best from the writer and gives the teacher the best chance to be helpful

- Aids learning and requires a response that is the product of discovery

- Furnishes data to start from

- May take the form of, or be construable into, a proposition

- Limits either form or content or both

- Will stipulate the audience to be addressed, wherever feasible

According to the Commission on Writing, designer should be sure that any question he asks insures the possibility of a rhetorically effective composition.

1. A good question should be stimulating: it should present a subject matter with which a student can readily become engaged and it should present the subject in such a way that he can make an assertion about it. Not 'My Summer Vacation' but 'What do you think was the point of failure in your summer vacation?'

2. A good question should be fashioned to the interest and abilities of the students. Like any writer, the poser of a question must be aware of his audience.

3. A good question should seek to elicit a specific response. Although one may at times wish a student to generate his own topic, generally one should seek to show the student the specific area in which he is to organize his essay and the audience for whom the essay is intended. A teacher should beware of his own power and not force the student to write to the teacher/

4. A good question should be clear and precise in its instructions. In all respects, the demands on the questioner are identical with those on the writer.

2.2. Designing genre-based communicative task

Many writing tasks students complete in a general academic writing class are communication-oriented. When we design a writing task in a GA course, we

should create an appropriate communication environment in which the task is called for. Let us take the scenario of job application and the genre of application letter as an example to illustrate the steps or principles for designing a communication environment for a communicative writing task.

1. Choose *a relevant, authentic or close-to-authentic communication situation or event* which calls for some written communication. (a need to apply for a job; a need to recruit applicants) Remember to consult the language curriculum for what is meant by 'relevant'.

2. Choose *an appropriate and relevant genre which is needed to achieve the communication* (a job application letter and a CV). Again, don't forget to consult the language curriculum for what is meant by 'relevant'.

3. Create *the details of the communication context*:

    • *Wherever possible create some realistic details of the key participants (readers & writers)* involved in the communication situation, e.g., the writer being a job applicant, who is a fresh graduate from a local university specializing in computer graphic design. etc; the readers being the potential employer and the personnel manager of a start-up advertising company looking for an IT-artist who is creative, energetic and committed applicants.

    • *To your best knowledge, outline the culture*, nature*, beliefs, values, requirements, and expectations* of the key players and their discourse communities (e.g., a local advertising company which advertises different up-market products, etc., which requires employees to do a lot of team work, visit clients, etc.)

    • *T*hese details are necessary for students to work with to complete the task. Ensure that there is internal logic among the details of the situation to solve the writing 'problem' or 'need'.

4. Create *the writing task* which involves some ***actions and a product*** (e.g., to write an application letter and a CV) and ***a topicor an event*** (e.g., responding to a managerial position advertised in SCMP).

5. Set some ***necessary constraints*** (e.g., length of the letter, real/assigned names of the key players, etc.). Note that constraints are not always a must unless they are genre-specific constraints (e.g., all business letters are short). Some teachers set a cap on the length of students' writing because they want to control the time spent on grading, while other teachers do this out the concern of students' time management.

It is important to note that the more ***advanced*** the class, the bigger need there is to ***detail*** all the above 5 items. The ***less advanced*** a class, the bigger need there is to ***simplify*** the task.

Some of the principles discussed above may not be applicable if the target genre is a creative type, e.g., a limerick. If this is the case, you may consider the following suggestions:

1. Choose ***a genre*** (e.g., a poem, a rhyme) which your students can handle.

2. If needed, give students ***a theme*** (e.g., love, family, school) or ***create a cause*** for completing the task (e.g., expressing admiration for a beautiful girl or a handsome boy, venting frustration about some social injustice such as discrimination, etc.)

3. Set some necessary ***practical constraints*** (e.g., the length, the meter, the topic, etc.)

Task 1 (Instructions for Assignment 1)

Create the writing task of your teaching packet by following the steps suggested above.

Once the nitty-gritty of the communication/writing scenario and the task requirements have been set, you can start writing the instructions for the task.

When giving task instructions, a teacher should:

1. Spell out communication or writing *situation* (e.g., the topic and the cause: an issue, an incident, an occasion, a problem, feeling hurt by someone, etc). Supply the necessary details (note not 'all' the details). The amount of details to supply depends on how complicated the communication situation is and whether the details might give your students a better idea of how to tackle their task.

2. Spell out the *role* (if there is one) the student plays (i.e., the rhetorical writer) in the written product and the role of the readers

3. Spell out the *genre type* expected of to carry out the communication / writing (e.g., a limerick, a letter, a proposal, etc).

4. Spell out *the exact writing instructions using imperatives* (e.g., 'Write *a letter to the editor'*; 'Design a *brochure'*; 'Explain the *procedure of…'*, etc.) If possible, list the instructions with one step per line and enumerate each step.

5. Spell out other *essential requirements* and *limits* such as the length, the formatting of the final document, the names of the writer and the readers, which are of relevance to the final assessment.

6. Simplify language and use short sentences where possible.

7. Number instructions or notes where needed.

Task 2

Can you identify the principles applied in the following task instructions taken from a writing textbook? Describe the level of the intended learners.

Prepare a sales letter for M. Howard, manager of the Ivy International Convention Center in Kingston, Jamaica. The letter is addressed to Arnold Ziffel, Chairman of the American Livestock Producers Organization, 1220 Morganfield Street,

Chicago, Illinois. Use the following information to write the letter. Write your first draft on a separate sheet of paper.

Background

You (M. Howard) have learned that ALPO is planning to hold its annual conference in the West Indies next year, and you want them to use your convention center. Your center has 300 hotel rooms, five function rooms, a large exposition area, and complete restaurant facilities. It is located on a beautiful beach, and it offers a swimming pool, tennis courts, a golf course, and boating. You and your staff are fully prepared to plan and conduct an individualized conference. There are a number of options available, and you can offer a basic, five-day package, including meals, for $250 per person. Enclose a brochure that provides pictures and more detailed information.

Task 3 (Instructions for Assignment 1)

Now, write the instructions for the target task of the teaching packet, which are to be placed at the beginning of your student booklet.

One more example of a valid writing task is provided below.This task was designed for a multi-lingual group of young adult students at upper intermediate level studying to take the IELTS examination in the near future with the intention of entering a British university. The group have studied a number of different text types and the linguistic conventions in each including pseudo-scientific reports and articles such as those found in publications such as National Geographic; news articles on current issues from different newspaper types; formal letters in the context of financial and general business English and informal letters and emails. They have also studied examples of academic writing such as discursive essays, reports describing processes and conventions such as sentence types in paragraphs and punctuation.

The task: "What are the arguments for and against children learning one or more foreign languages from the age of seven? Is it better to learn one foreign language fluently or to have a superficial understanding of three or four? Refer to how and when you learned languages other than your own mother tongue. *The text you write is intended for publication in a Sunday newspaper supplement and should be similar in style to the text in the reading test above*."

The section written in italics above is particularly important as the students had just read a text on this topic which provided them with ideas on the sort of things they could include (as opposed to having to only use their imaginations). It was also a reminder of the genre or text style they should use in their own texts.

Rational underlying task:

• The genre and intended readership is clear and a model has been provided.

• The task has a purpose in as much as conclusions must be drawn.

• A wide range of language is required for the task. This includes discursive and narrative features.

• A word limit is given.

• The task does not rely on imagination: the students all have backgrounds in language learning and they have been provided with discussion points in the text they read prior to this writing task.

Marking criteria:

• Task achievement

• Appropriacy of language used for the genre specified

• General cohesion and coherence

• Conformity to conventions such as sentence types used and paragraphing

• Spelling and punctuation where misuse of these interferes with comprehension

- Range of language structures and lexis
- Accuracy
- Conformity to word count

2.3. Designing Differentiated Writing Tasks for Different Ability Groups

It is crucial to consider different level of learners in one group nowadays. In this regard, we will providea clear example of writing task which is designed for different level learners.

The writing task is coherently integrated into the theme 'Travelling to Hong Kong'. Students learning this theme are taught the lexis and language structures in authentic contexts beforedoing the writing task.

The writing task as an assessment tool can serve a differentiating function and also meetthe different needs of the students having a wide range of linguistic abilities. Teachers canemploy the following strategies to cater for different ability groups:

• Students of different linguistic abilities are given different contextual clues and support.More able students are given the notes only (Set 1) as contextual clues whereas less ablestudents are given both the notes (Set 1) and the letter (Set 2).

• There are varied contextual clues and support given in different parts of the notes (Set 1)and the letter (Set 2). Therefore, different cognitive and performance demands are madeon students while they are making use of the given contextual clues and support.

• The writing task is designed in such a way that students need to provide only factualinformation at the beginning but they are required to express their feelings and judgmentin the later part of their writing.

Special features

• Differentiated contextual clues are used in the assessment tasks to cater for differentability groups. The complexity of the language, organization, length and context in theteaching materials are varied to pitch at students' linguistic level.

• Less able students can develop a sense of achievement while more able students will stillfind the writing task challenging as they can enrich the content by adding extra ideas intheir writing.

Differentiated assessment tasks

Your cousin, Alice, lives in Singapore. She came to Hong Kong last week. It was the firsttime that she came to Hong Kong. Therefore you took her to different places of attraction inHong Kong. Now write a letter to your uncle in another country telling him about your visitsto those places of attraction. Study the following notes which will help you write the letter toyour uncle.

Set 1

Friday Saturday Sunday

Location the Ocean Park inAberdeen

the Po Lin Monastery on

Lantau Island ?

Transport Bus Ferry/Bus ?

Highlights ofthe visits

• watched the dolphin show

• tried the roller-coaster

• went to the Wave

Cove and the shark aquarium

• saw the world's longest"dancing dragon" inthe Middle Kingdom

• bought some souvenirs

• the big Buddha

• the vegetarian lunch

• theHau Wong Templenearby

• souvenirs from thetemple...................?

How you and Alice felt after the visits?

Set 2

Complete the following letter using the given information about the visits.

Dear Uncle Jim,

How (be) you? Do you still remember Alice? She came toHong Kong last week. Since it was the first time that she visited Hong Kong, I

We went to on Friday. We went there by … We…

It was really great fun! We especially loved

We also … onSaturday.

What we enjoyed most was … because...

Alice and I … Alice told me that she really felt … !

Well, I know you've never been to Hong Kong before. Uncle Jim, when will youcome to Hong Kong and visit us? Please let me know as soon as possible.

Best wishes,

(signature)

Givenexampleraises effectiveness of the result, as students with less abilities to write will have a sample to fill in, and more advanced students will not be bored during the lesson as they have more complicated task to do.

CHAPTER III.TEACHING WRITING IN EFL CLASSES

1. Process-oriented and product-oriented approaches to the teachingwriting

Inthischapter, we willdiscuss different approaches to teaching writing as well as provide with methodological recommendations to teachers.

The process oriented approach refers to a teaching approach that focuses on the process a writer engages inwhen constructing meaning. This teaching approach concludes with editing as a final stage in text creation,rather than an initial one as in a product oriented approach. The process oriented approach may includeidentified stages of the writing process such as: pre-writing, writing and re-writing. Once the rough drafthas been created, it is polished into subsequent drafts with the assistance of peer and teacher conferencing.Final editing and publication can follow if the author chooses to publish their writing.

Verbal language, drawings, play and verbal interaction are part of the process of literacy development.[20] These are essential and not only precede writing development but continue to contribute toit in significant ways throughout development. Children invent, interact, react, and extend writing activitiesthroughout the process of literacy acquisition.

Graphic symbolism develops over time, after gestures and object constancy have become concrete, andspeech has become controlled and deliberate. Vygotsky[21] defines drawing as a kind ofgraphic speech. Children gain a sense of writing the same way they do of speech by experimentation andexploration. Initially, written language is a prop that facilitates human activity. Writing begins to carry thesame functional load earlier carried by

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[20]Dyson A.H. From prop to mediator: The changing role of written language in children's symbolic repertoires. University of California: National Center for the Study of Writing, 1992. P.147

[21]Vygotsky, L.S. Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.p.185

speech, gesture and drawing. Therefore, drawing, talking and writing support each other.

These principles remain constant whether the child is acquiring literacy in their first or second language. For very young children, rhyming words and word patterns add to children's consciousness of words. Writingdevelopment is preceded by speech development. Symbol weaving becomes an intertwining of talk anddrawing. In studying literacy development Edelsky found that bilingual writers make language choicesdepending on ability, emotion and expressional need. Oral language activities with access to many symbolictools facilitates writing development for these writers Use of the arts promotes the crossing of social, cultural and language barriers.

Betancourt and Phinney[22]cite research on second language composition that shows how functionalbilingual writers follow the same composing process as monolingual writers do when involved in processoriented instructional programs. Hudelson and Hamayanconcur with whole languageteaching strategies for the second language learner approaching literacy acquisition. This is attributed to theessential need for learning language in context, associated with meaning which is important and relevant to the language learner. Cummins theorizes that when acquiring oral language skills, developmentfollows very similar stages for first and subsequent languages. Involvement in the meaningful andcommunicative use of language is central for development of oral and written language skills for second language learners. Valdés notes that in order to examine the acquisition of literacy ina child's second language (L2), researchers sometimes compare what we know about primary language (L1)literacy acquisition and search for similarities. Johnson relates research in L2 written acquisition toresearch in oral L2 acquisition by stating that "research in one area can inform the other area".

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[22] Betancourt F., Phinney M. Sources of writing block in bilingual writers (Report # 143). ERIC Document Reproduction Service No.ED 281 361.

Edelsky and Valdés express caution regarding such an assumption.Verbal and written language acquisition differ in significant ways. Edelsky cautions educators to be carefulin applying simple functional models of oral language development in research on written language growth.

Unlike oral language, written language involves the use of a deliberately controlled symbolic system tomediate activity. A written word can have symbolic representational meaning but can also have imaginarymeaning or be used as a prop. Oral language includes many paralinguistic cues for boththe sender and receiver of the message that written language does not include. These are issues that areimportant when instructing the bilingual learner.

Valdés[23]provides an overview of the nature of bilingualism. She indicates that before prescribing aspecific approach to the teaching of writing for the second language learner, we must first examine anddefine the needs of the target population. For example, she differentiates between elective andcircumstantial bilingualism and incipient and functional circumstantial bilinguals, providing reasons whyeach must be considered individually. Once the needs of these students have been identified, then we arebetter equipped to identify the instructional techniques best suited for their learning styles.

Elective bilinguals are those individuals who choose to learn a language through study or seeking out acontextual situation, such as living in or visiting a foreign country, or both. Circumstantial bilinguals arethose individuals who have had little choice but to learn another language in order to survive due to their life circumstances. Haugen observes that circumstantial bilinguals are not in a situation where theirfirst language meets all of their communicative needs. For the majority of cases, Valdés states that"bilingual American minorities are, by definition, circumstantial bilinguals"[24]. She expresses caution inidentifying the educational needs of these bilingual children ". . . because of the complexity

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[23] Valdes G. Identifying priorities in the study of the writing of Hispanic students: Final report. Berkeley: Center for the study of Writing, University of California, 1988. P.125

[24]Valdes G. Bilingual Minorities and Language Issues in Writing. Written Communication, 9 (1), 1992. p. 94

of circumstantialbilingualism, one cannot easily classify bilingual individuals using one or two variables such as 'firstlanguage learned' or 'language spoken at home'". The specific experience of each individual witheach language can impact the loss or retention of both languages. The competition for language usedepending on the domain, in addition to other factors such as emotional association with speaking one of thelanguages or development of domain-specific vocabulary are factors to consider when addressing theinstruction of bilingual students.

In addition to these factors, differences can develop between twoindividuals in the same generation. Theacquisition of the target language and the retention of the native language depend on opportunities for useby the child. Valdés notes that even in diglossic communities, places where both languages are used andaccepted, invariably the native or immigrant language tends to becomes used for intimacy and informalsituations. The majority language, however, develops concurrently with world experience, buildingvocabulary and competence along with domain association. An example of this is the development ofEnglish for academic purposes while using the minority language for community and family activities.

Competence in the majority language soon outdistances that in the native language.Identifying the language learning stage in which a child is operating affects the ways in which we proposeto teach him to write. Valdés further distinguishes between two types of circumstantial bilingualism:incipient and functional. Incipient bilinguals are in the stage of acquiring their second language, afunctional bilingual prefers using L1 yet is able to function in L2 in almost all contexts and domains. Valdésobserves that most American minorities with a native language other than English, "acquire their ethnic orimmigrant language first and then acquire English, this country's majority or societal

language"[25]. This period of acquisition is referred to as incipient bilingualism. If the second language learner in ourclassroom is an incipient bilingual, an individual still in the act of acquiring her second language, thenwritinginstruction needs to encourage literacy development in the home language. If the child is afunctional bilingual, writing instruction can involve increased use of the second language.

Process versus Product for the Second Language Learner

Reyes cautions against over-enthusiastic use of the process oriented approach with second language learners. In expressing concern, Reyes examines four assumptions that she views as inherent in this approachto teaching writing. She cites examples of how each assumption interferes with second language acquisitionin the classroom.

The first assumption that school authorities make is in confusing the concept of English acquisition with that ofeducation, according to Reyes's first assumption. Assuredly, this measure becomes an attitude made bymajority language (English) speakers which creates conflict. Though subtle, this assumption can betransmitted easily to children and their families by the school staff.

The second assumption Reyes challenges is that linguistic minorities learn better if immersed into English as quickly as possible. In addition to the research named in this paper, she cites extensive researchconducted on language acquisition supporting initial instruction in the native language.

These studies indicate that bilingual students attain higher achievement levels when allowed to begin literacyinstruction in their primary language before transferring to English literacy. Students who learn academicconcepts and literacy skills in their native language can more readily and quickly transfer

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[25]Valdes G. Bilingual Minorities and Language Issues in Writing. Written Communication, 9 (1), 1992. p. 99

those skills to asecond language because knowledge is grounded in the language and schema they comprehend.[26]

The third assumption Reyes examines is that of approaching the education ofchildren from very differentexperiential backgrounds with a "one size fits all" approach. She claims that teachers who implement theprocess oriented approach to teaching writing without modifications, have "lost sight of the fact that mereimplementation of [these] programs does not necessarily translate into authentic, natural, or holisticexperiencesfor non-mainstream students".

The fourth assumption challenged by Reyes is that error correction in process oriented instruction hamperslearning. She observes that in attempting to follow the principles of process instruction, teachers generallyrefrain from overt error correction out of a fear of discouraging fluency and voice. She states that unlessteachers draw student attention to errors found in writing, error correction is ignored by second languagelearners. The assumptions Reyes highlights regarding the process approach to teaching writing are crucial
for use in examining our teaching practices.

While the activity sets are presented here in chronological sequence for clarity, during actual writing, there is much recursivity among the steps.

1.   Pre-writing activities prepare learners for a final writing task and activate, review or build sub-skills that prepare the learner for completing the main writing task. They usually focus on the audience, the content, and the vocabulary necessary for the task. These are typically word and phrase level activities.

2.   During-writing activities engage learners in recursive writing, self-editing and revisions. As the students are guided through writing and re-writing, the teacher should guide them through other areas such as syntax.

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[26] Reyes M.D.L.L. A process approach to literacy using dialogue journals and literature logs with second language learners.Research in the Teaching of English 25, (3). 1991. p. 434

3.   Post-writing activities help learners reflect on and revise their writing based on feedback from an audience, such as peers and/or an instructor.

Process-based Activity Set for L2 Writing

Pre-writing tasks   During writing   Post-writing tasks

Pre-writing tasks build/review sub-skills for the final writing activity. Tasks during the main writing process encourage self-editing or peer-review. Post-writing tasks allow for reflection, sharing, or publishing of the final product.

The process is recursive. Even after the post-writing task(s), new sub-skills can be developed for a next revision on the written assignment or for the next assignment.

Pre-Writing

Pre-writing tasks review and build students' knowledge of relevant vocabulary, relevant grammar points and, most importantly, students' background knowledge, since that is what really generates thoughtful and interesting written work. Pre-writing tasks are a crucial element of successful writing instruction.

Pre-writing activities may take many different forms. Here we review a few effective ways to get the writing process started: associograms, prompts, interviews, and reading/listening activities.Anassociogram is a collection of lexical items and/or ideas that relate to a topic. Prompts: awell chosen picture or song can foster the learner's creativity. A few questions in addition to the picture can really help ideas flow.Written prompts can help students hypothesize what is going on in the picture and generate interesting content. These prompts can be provided by the instructor or generated through brainstorming by the students. They can follow the Five W's and the Hfrom journalism: who, what, when, where, why and how)

Interviews can serve to generate ideas for writing and move learners beyond their own experiences. It usually works best when some of the questions (using the 5 W's and 1H) are unexpected or "hook" students' interests.

When language learners respond to texts, whether written or oral, they can learn new vocabulary, expressions, grammatical structures, and valuable pragmatic information (e.g., how to structure an e-mail, a movie review, etc.).

Below is an example of a reading-based pre-writing activity that leads to students writing their own greeting cards. The questions accompanying this model birthday card should lead the students to notice relevant expressions, rhetorical structure, grammar, content, greetings, etc.

During-Writing

Once students are ready to write, they need clear instructions and resources to complete the next steps in the process: writing drafts, revising, self-editing, expanding. Students should be allowed to use notes they generated from the pre-writing tasks. Decide also whether they may use a dictionary or spell-checker, and what you expect them to do for this activity. Ensure that your pedagogical objectives align with the actual activity you assign your students.

Example of During Writing Task

You will write a short story that tells your reader about your latest winter vacation. It will describe in some detail - the more interesting the better - what you did, where, and how it went. After you are finished composing your short story, make sure to re-read your story and run through the self-editing checklist! In the meantime, follow these steps to begin your masterpiece!

• Write a paragraph that explains a) where the story takes place, b) who was there, and c) what was the funny event that happened.

• Write 2-3 paragraphs a) about what happened before, during and after this event or b) add descriptions of the main characters that explain why this event was funny.

- Provide details that make the story interesting for your reader (make sure theywant to read it!).

- Start with a hook, have a clear beginning, middle and end (a complete story arc) in your narrative.

- Add phrases to make the story flow smoothly (cohesion markers, pronouns, conjunctions)

- Eliminate "fluff" (unnecessary or redundant details)

- Review your story for fluidity, vocabulary, grammar, style and mechanics.

Post-Writing

We define post-writing as the step in the writing process where the written text is shared with other audiences, such as a peer-editor or the instructor or even with the general public.

The basic components of post-writing activities:

- Re-read your story, make sure sentences make sense.

- Add phrases to make the story flow smoothly (cohesion markers, pronouns, conjunctions).

- Eliminate "fluff" (unnecessary or redundant details).

- Proofread for spelling, vocabulary, grammar (checklist).

- Edit your paper (peer-editing, post-teacher editing).

- Share with audience (website, print, etc.).

1. After trying to write these expressions as fast as possible, try to list some pedagogical implications for teaching handwriting.

a . $\mathcal{A}a$ …………………………………………………..

b . $\mathcal{B}b$ …………………………………………………..

2. Which of these components of hand writing are the most important ones? What does this listmean to you a as a teacher.

1. Holding the pencil

2. Pencil Control

3. Hand & Eye Coordination

4. Visual & Motor skills

5. Directionality orientation (left to right – top to bottom - counter clock wise directions)

6. Shapes of letters

7. Size of the individual letters and size of letters in relation to one another

8. Ascenders and descenders (g j p q y: frog - dog - boy)

9. Upper & lower case letters

10. Spacing: Once pupils begin writing phrases and sentences, be sure that they allow for enough space between words. One simple technique is to ask the pupils to leave a "finger space" between each word or to put a pencil in between each word.

5. Which of the following reasons do you think lie behind poor writing skills?

a. Of the four language skills, writing is the skill most frequently neglected.

b. Little preparation is done for written activities in class.

c. Students are given too difficult writing assignments and tasks at early stages, e. g. write a short paragraph about that you did on Friday.

d. Writing is not taught gradually where students can move from copying to guided and free writing.

6. Which of the following purposes are the most important for writing?

a. Description: describing a living being, an object or an abstract image to make it recognizable

b. Narration: narrating events in a sequence

c. Exposition: It may tell how to make or do something, report on an experience, or explore an idea.

d. Persuasion: making people change their behavio r or train of thought;

e. Reasoning: inviting the reader to follow the logic of the author and to co -operate in producing ideas.

7. Do you agree with the following statements? Why?

a. Writing can be defined as a mental, linguistic and physical process.

b. The students' final written product is more important than how students work through the process to create the final product.

c. Helping students to generate ideas for their` writings an important part of the teacher's role in the writing lesson.

d. Students should always work alone on their writing assignments.

e. Students should be writing to please their teachers as their main audience.

f . Students actually benefit from the teacher making every language error.

g. The teacher needs to prepare the students to write and provide enough support to help them to generate the content of their writing, e.g. postcard, letter, short gapped text, etc.

h. The teacher should give students sufficieot0time to write "and rewrite.

i . The teacher should mingle among learners and give them feedback throughout the writing process,not just on the final product.

j . The teacher should select the best pieces of writing and publish them, e.g. hanging them on the room, school homepage, etc.

8. Writing activities in the classroom fall on a continuum from copying to free writing . Can you tell the difference between them?

Activities for teaching writing

As we have mentioned before, writing activities in the classroom fall on a continuum from copying to free writing:

ACCURACY   FLUENCY

Copying   Controlled   Guided writing   Free writing

Copying: mechanical copying activities suitable for early writing skills such as:

a. left - right orientation

b. shapes of letters grouped as in textbook

c. ascenders and descenders

d. letter size

e. differences between upper and lower case

f .letter combinations

Controlled writing: After mastering handwriting skills, children follow the instructions that encourage them to go beyond mechanical copying and do exercises which require them to think and add something of their own. These exercises are wholly predictable so they are either right or wrong and thus can be corrected by students themselves in class. These activities aim at developing the following basic writing skills:

a. letter combinations

b. words

c. word combinations (e.g. a blue shirt, a small car)

d. short simple sentences

e. combination of simple sentences in short texts

Here are some useful controlled writing activities:

1. Jigsaw sentences (matching the halves of several sentences and writing them out. Extra halves can be given to make the exercise more suitable to higher levels. Look at these two jigsawexamples and do the following:

a. What is the difference between these two examples?

b. Which example you prefer to use for teaching writing? Give reasons.

Example (1)

Sara is   2 brothers.

She is   in Gaza.

She has   from Palestine.

Their names are   10 years old.

She lives   Sami and Ahmed.

Example (2)

Ben visited   in Jerusalem

Amy bought   2 books yesterday

Suha wanted   to see Rania

Al-Aqsa Mosque is   Omar last week

2. Filling gap: Consider the following types of filling gaps. Which is more communicative?

Why?

Example (1)

The brothers looked in the . . . ………(a picture of a mirror may be provided)

Many tourists visit …………. (a picture of Dome of the Rock may be provided)

Example (2)

My name is ………….…….. I am ……years old. I live in ……………. I have 2

………….. Their names are ……………… and ………………

3. Re-ordering: Consider the following types of filling gaps. Which is more communicative?

Why?

Example (1)

loved - The brothers - the princess

Ben - invited - to his house - Omar

Example (2)

I prayed Al-Aser there - I went to Al-Aqsa Mosque –

I visited it last summer - Myfavorite city is Jerusalem.

4. Questions

Give students a set of guided and sequenced questions which when answered will form a well set -out description. e.g.

Answer the following questions in full sentences.

Q: What did you do for your holidays last year?

A: Last year, I…..

Q: Who did you go with"

Guided writing: It is obviously not possible to go straight from modified copying activities to writing free compositions. There must be certain bridging activities. Guided writing can be done in different ways.

1. Giving a short text model where particular features of the text are studied, e.g. the way sentences are joined, the use of passive, modals, etc. For instance, students may read a description of a British town or school then they can be asked to write about their own town or school or another school shown in a picture. This can be done as follows:

Model

Jerusalem is old and big city. It is in the center of Palestine. There are many holy places. It has Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. There are many shops and hotels. It has many long narrow streets. Many tourists visit it.

After drawing pupils' attention to Jerusalem's size, location, etc., pupils can be asked to write a similar paragraph about about Gaza, Khan Younis, Hebron, etc using some notes as these:

Gaza : city   Hebron: city

South   South

Al-Omari Mosque   Ibrahimi Mosque

Famous of   famous of

streetstreet

Finally students are asked to write about their own t own or village, using key points observed in the previous models (e.g. age, size. Location famous of, population, main buildings, etc)

2. By answering questions

a. How old are you?

b. What do you look like?

c. What kind of clothes do you wear? Why?

d. What kind of job do you do? Do you like it?

e. What are your favorite hobbies? Why do you like them?

f . Where do you live?

g. Do you like living there? Why or why not?

Now that you have the information about yourself ready, fill in the gaps in to complete this descriptive paragraph about yourself.

I am _____ years old, I _____ (your looks). I wear _____ because_____. I am a _____. I like / don't like my job because _____. I enjoy_____. I often _____ (describe how often you do your hobby). I also like _____ (write about another hobby) because _____. I live in _____. People in _____ are _____ . I enjoy / don't enjoy living in _____ because_____.

Practice: Ask your friends the same questions as in exercise 2 and write paragraphs about them.

3. Meaningful (communicative) Gaped Writing

Dear Nazmi,

I am having a very …………………….. time in this workshop.

It is the first time I have heard about …………………….....

However, one of the difficulties we face with teaching writing here in Palestine is this …………………….……………………………

I would like to ask you one question.:………………………………

Best wishes,

………………………………………………………………….

<u>Free writing</u>: to encourage learners to write down their ideas quickly about a topic without paying too much attention to grammar, spelling, etc. `Writing about neighbors or war are example.

Some of the following activities are still highly controlled, others come quite near to free writing.

Number them in the order in which you might use them in the classroom going from the most controlled to the freest.

<u>Open-ended dialogue</u>

A: Hello Jane. Well, this is a surprise.

B:

A: yes , it must be three years. What are you doing with yourself these days?

B:

A: Oh, so you don't work at the bank any more, then. Etc.

Give students the beginning and end of a paragraph. They have to write the middle.

Give students pictures to describe, possibly supplying relevant vocabulary. . . .

Picture composition. Students describe a whole sequence of pictures, telling the story.

Correcting written work

It is impossible for teachers of large classes to correct all written work, since that would be too time consuming. . . . This is not to say that you should never check. Correct or mark what students write.

There are times when this needs to be done, for the purpose of feedback or in order to reassure students that their work is taken seriously. . . . In general,

though, it is better that students check their own work, finding and correcting mistakes and requesting explanation for difficulties.

9. Below are several correcting and marking techniques. Which of these techniques would be the most efficient to use in class?

a. Spot check: The teacher circulates when students are writing, giving comments concerning errors and, if necessary, the teacher tell students how to correct errors

b. Peer marking: the teacher asks students to work in pairs and correct each other's work, helping each other. Then the teacher and the students go through the answers together

c. Peer marking: The teacher asks students to do some writing tasks in pairs, thus reducing errors and correction load.

d. The teacher collects all the notebooks at the end of the lesson and correct them either at break time or at home. Then he give the books back the next day.

e. the teacher just go through the answers and get students to correct their work. Sometimes I write sentences on the board.

f . Global marking: The teacher marks free writing by impression, without any correction

Three-phase framework of teaching writing

10. Match the following three-phase framework of teaching writing

a. Pre-writing (schemata activation, motivation for writing and generating ideas)

b. While-writing (selecting and arranging ideas)

c. Post-writing (editing and revising the writing through self and peer correction as well as the teacher)

3.2. Cognitively oriented approach to teaching writing

A cognitively oriented approach, in Mann's terms, is "primarily concerned with the refinement of intellectual operation." It may seem that this description may rarely refer to curriculum content. However, when examined more carefully, it can well account for the central problem of curriculum as that of both sharpening the intellectual process and developing a set of cognitive skills applicable to learning.

The approach is largely process oriented in two senses:

1) It identifies the goals of teaching as providing a repertoire of essentially 'content-independent' cognitive skills;

2) it is also concerned with understanding how the process of learning occurs in the classroom. Here, the relationship between the learner and the materials is of prime importance. Syllabus can be, accordingly, defined as the constant interaction between the learner and the materials to which he is exposed. The problem of the syllabus designer is thus to identify the appropriate setting through which a reconciliation is made between the learner and the situation.

Typically, an analysis of what groups of language learners require to know in order to effectively participate in their particular situations depends heavily on the particularity of those very situations. The aim of a cognitive approach is to develop an insight in the learner, enabling him to make his own selections and interpretations of the existing situations. The insight provides the learner with opportunities to stretch his skills beyond the classroom setting.

The cognitive process orientation tends to develop a deductive approach to the process of 'writing'. Unlike the inductive approach in which writing is seen as a practice in language usage, the deductive approach views writing as an organization of ideas. As for the former, writing incorporates correct language into correct usage, resulting from the development of linguistic competence. So, a major bulk of class activity is devoted to the enhancement of 'usage', such as subject/verb consistency, active/passive voice, and so on. However, writing is

not a linguistic process per se. It encompasses a wide range of exercises that go beyond the linguistic scope.

It should be made clear that an emphasis on developing cognitive competence does not detract from the significance of linguistic competence. Needless to say, the student should have activities stimulated through the linguistic approach as well as activities introduced by the new approach. In fact, linguistic knowledge affords the building blocks out of which the learner's thought is shaped. The learner, however, needs to get the blocks into shape. He needs to learn how to think logically, and how to develop his ideas convincingly. The teacher's job is, therefore, to develop the learner's cognitive abilities, rather than merely focusing on the problems of syntax and vocabulary. The cognitive approach conceptualizes writing as a means of directing learners to assess their own structures, which, in turn, leads to the understanding of Communicative Competence. As Di Pietro[27]states, matters of grammatical form are best explained in strategic contexts.

The process of writing is almost always directed towards readers whose expectations shape the form and content of the message. Therefore, writers should always discover solutions, as they move on, to the problem of interaction with readers. They should modify their discourse as they attempt to get closer to their intended meaning. This is the time when the teacher's role carries the greatest latitude in the classroom. It is the teacher's behavior which guides that of the student. The teachers' main part is to activate 'productive thinking' in their pupils through developing appropriate strategies with which the writers can approximate their meaning. They engage their students in different activities, use particular procedures, or employ specific techniques.

Such an approach may look similar to 'discovery learning' in the sense that active participation by the student is an indispensable condition for

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[27]Cited in Littlewood W. Communicative Language Teaching: An Introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1981.p.156

learning, and that it aims to enhance 'productive thinking' of the learner. However, the two approaches should not be confused. Discovery learning approach is too extremely process-oriented for which to assign any objectives refuses to count. In other words, one cannot identify any clear objectives for such an approach, because the structure of the stimuli is too complex to be determined in advance. In the cognitive approach, the role that the teacher plays in the classroom is of vital importance. S/he is not a mere mediator between the learner and the phenomenon of writing, but rather an authoritative source of information that appropriates and guides the 'productive thinking' in their students.

In this approach to writing the student's attention should be towed away from mere linguistic structures to the 'communicative part' linguistic ingredients play in 'writing'. The learner should be made aware of the functions of different grammatical structures. Actual writing begins when learners having already acquired the basic principles of the language-how different forms are made and what functions they fulfil. The common term for this stage is 'paragraph writing'.

Usually at 'paragraph writing', the learners become familiar with different methods of paragraph development. They are taught the narrative, descriptive, and other paragraph types. They learn how rhetoricsis used in different texts. After a general statement about each type, sample paragraphs of a specific nature are presented to the learner. This is where writing begins. Students are asked to write a similar paragraph on a suggested topic. The compositions are then proofread by the teacher. Unfortunately, the main part of the teacher's correction concerns that of the learner's grammatical mistakes and little is done with respect to the overall organization of the composition.

It is mainly at this stage that students find themselves at a loss, (i.e. being unable to write an acceptable composition). Often they know where to begin, but they do not know how to develop a piece of writing. The problem is not

with 'rhetorical functions' in writing since they have been taught about each type of paragraph effectively through a lot of explanation and examples. Nor are the students incapable of producing 'rhetorical techniques' since in their earlier courses they have been exposed to different sentence structures, and have done a lot of practice in this relation. The main trouble lies in the intervening sections, or what can be eloquently termed 'operational intermediates'. If the process of writing is sketched in the form of a tree diagram, then it could be said that the sections appearing between the higher nodes and the lower ones tend to be missing in the students' compositions.

Very often we notice in our students' compositions that an idea is left out without being fully developed, and that there is a sudden leap from the rhetorical functions to the rhetorical techniques. This problem can be attributed to the student's excessive preoccupation with correct structures, which overwhelms their reasoning capacity. They are so absorbed in the forms that the outlining of their ideas is neglected. Here, through concentrating on the logical expansion, the student should be informed of the primacy of thought over linguistic expressions.

It is necessary that the operational intermediates be employed in all types of paragraphs. The learners should know how much information they are required to put in their compositions so that the readers may follow their line of argument with ease. They should also learn how to order and sequence their ideas so that the readers will not be left alone in the labyrinth of the writer's clumsy composition. Students also need to be equipped with a knowledge of the so-called 'Cohesive Devices' and the application of this knowledge in writing. Although their significance has been repeatedly indicated to the students, cohesive devices are often absent in our students' compositions. Often, the sentences written by the students are so loosely conjoined that the readers may feel they have been unevenly fit in the wrong place. Therefore, a good deal of practice in using cohesive devices seems necessary. It should be noted that the

teaching of such devices in isolation would not be of much use. Rather, it would be more advantageous if they received sufficient attention while different types of composition-argumentative or expository-are practiced.

The commonest sequence in practicing types of writing suggests that the narrative be exercised first. (Psycho)logically speaking, it is good start. As Goldman[28] says, you may admit that people have less trouble when components of any entity are given to them. In narration the writer is provided with the subject matter he wants to write about, since narration demands little or almost no reasoning capacity. The students are often successful in narrative writing, for they need almost no extra components about the sequence of events to cope with. However, the students still need to develop productive thinking in order to connect sets of events together. The usual procedure in the narrative is that the topic is given to the students, and they are required to depict an imaginary or real situation on which they write. The suggestion here is to hand out pictures that, when looked at serially, provide a brief account of stories. It is assumed that such pictures can spur the cognitive ability of the students. They should think of a logical or natural sequence for the pictures.

Description is another type of writing. It is often suggested that description be presented after narration. Description is a little more troublesome for students because it is, in fact, the first step towards reasoning. In writing descriptive paragraphs the students need to think of the important details they want to put into their compositions. They should be informed as to which pieces of information are needed for their specific compositions. Pictures can still be used to provide the students with the theme of their compositions. After looking carefully at the pictures, the students should judge what is essential to put into their writing.

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[28]Cited in Widdowson H.G. Teaching Language as Communication. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1978.p.165

The other types of writing include explanation and argumentation, which are the most difficult, for the students should think of both the subject matter and rational writing to convince the readers. At this stage, pictures are of little use because they do not provide an in-depth cognitive framework for the students. By this time, the students are supposed to have developed their reasoning capacity in such a way as to write convincingly and appropriately. Their compositions are expected to qualify for both sufficient information and logical ordering. Now, the teacher's role becomes less important, and the students are expected to have reached a level of language competency to work independently. Still the teacher can help. At this stage, the teachers' job is to identify the common logical fallacies that the students may face. Teachers can also provide their students with examples-of written materials-that illustrate these fallacies and pitfalls; they can also make some suggestions as to how the students can avoid them.

In brief, the main component of instruction in a cognitive approach is 'revision'. As they take on the role of both writers and readers, the students are taught to review their writings, predicting what problems they may have, and what possible reactions they may show towards their writings. The suggestion here is to write some of the compositions on the board or to use an Overhead/Opaque projector to this end. The students may then be urged to identify the mistakes, both grammatical and rhetorical, in their compositions. This procedure can develop an interactional attitude, and enhance productive thinking in the students.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important requirements for designing effective writing tasks is to think of coherent, connected activity sets, which include pre-writing, during-writing and post-writing activities. Connected activity sets help students complete the writing task successfully and foster the process of writing.

Working backwards from the final task makes it easier to design such activity sets. Only by viewing writing in the broader context of activity sets can you ensure that writing is taught as a process, with brainstorming, several writing and re-writing tasks, and active revision.

More attention should be paid to the design of writing tasks we set for our students. These should be valid tasks in terms of clarity in genre style and the intended readership; the task should have a purpose or outcome; it should require an appropriate range of structure and lexis; the task should not rely on imagination which could disadvantage some learners who may have little or nothing to say on a topic; a word limit should be set and the students should be clear on the criteria the teacher uses to evaluate and assess their finished work.

There is nothing wrong with students engaging in writing for its own sake – some may well be poets or budding novelists. However, the majority of our students will probably need to write text to get them through university or business, therefore we should set tasks which reflect these needs and ensure we teach these features as well as testing them.

The product-oriented approach to the teaching of writing emphasizes mechanicalaspects of writing, such as focusing on grammatical and syntactical structures and imitating models. This approach is primarily concerned with "correctness" and form of the finalproduct. Moreover, this approach fails to recognize that people write for an audience and fora purpose and that ideas are created and formulated during the process of writing. However,the process-oriented approach emphasizes that writing itself is a developmental process

thatcreates self-discovery and meaning. While the mechanical aspects of writing are important,they should not interfere with the composing process. This composing process requiresmuch revision and rewriting. The teacher intervenes and guides students during the composing process but initially does not emphasize "correctness" and the final product; theemphasizes on "correctness" and the final product comes only toward the very end of thewriting process (and, often, a major concern with "correctness" is put off until towards themiddle or even end of the writing course). Instead of worrying about form, studentsconcentrate on conveying a written message. Hence the product of writing will improve withthe discovery involved in composing.

Product-oriented approaches to writing largely concern the forms of the writtenproducts that students compose. The writing exercises applied in this approach typically dealwith sentence-level writing and paragraph-level organization. Students are often given aframework which illustrates a pattern of rhetorical organization; then, they are asked to fittheir ideas into this framework. Both the content and the form which the students deal withare largely controlled by the teacher. Since the main focus of these approaches is on writtenform, grammar is emphasized and a particular effort is made to avoid errors.

Process-oriented approaches concern the process of how ideas are developed andformulated in writing. Writing is considered a process through which meaning is created.

This approach characterizes writing as following a number of processes: First, a writer startswriting ideas as drafts. Subsequently, he checks to see whether the writing and theorganization makes sense to him or not. After that, he checks whether the writing will beclear to the reader. This approach focuses on how clearly and efficiently a student canexpress and organize his ideas, not on correctness of form. Students are first asked to gothrough such writing processes, trying organize and express their ideas clearly. Theassumption is that

what the student as a writer is going to say will become clearer throughtheseprocesses.   Students are also taught writing devices used in marking the organizationand in making the general coherence clearer.

Teaching writing must involve both process and product. Teachers should first focuson the organization of the writing. As the next step, they should deal with grammaticalproblems seen in writing. When students are not good at organizing their ideas, the teachershould deal with this before moving on to grammatical mistakes (presumably, later in theterm).   This is for several reasons, among them that better organization often leads to thereduction of other errors and, of course, the clear expression of ideas is the major point ofwriting.

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