

How to teach writing effectively

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Abstract:

Productive skills in performing the knowledge in foreign languages is crucial for analyzing the learners' progress. Writing and speaking are complex activities to learn. There are many responsibilities of the language teachers in training students to be master at writing skill. Various approaches for the issue have been presented and worked on by many academics. Strategies and techniques are necessary tool for the process of teaching writing effectively. It is important to develop them in practice. This article will be mainly based on the successful approaches in this skill.

Key words.Generating ideas, clustering, webbing, generalization, selecting, trend-spotting, coherence, socio-cognitive approach.

Introduction:

It should be known that, students learn writing by writing more. They will be in need of regular exercise in writing lessons. The process of writing should be taught by their teachers in order to achieve sufficient result. The success of the good writers depends on their repetitive practice.

According to Gardener (2009) the writing process involves some terms to discuss they are: generating ideas, developing and organizing the ideas, and revising then editing them. Effective writing can be taught by cycling all these stages until satisfactorily result is achieved. First of all it should be clearly understood by the students what the stages mean.

Generating ideas.

As in all subjects, learners need to develop or improve skills for getting to know what they know about a topic on paper, and generating ideas or finding more additional facts. It is first and more responsibility requiring step in writing. Because on this stage, the topic of writing is chosen and then it is checked by the teacher. If it is not relevant to the theme or out-of-topic it can be asked to change before starting to write. Further teacher should explain the students about the assignment and help to gather their ideas.

Developing and organizing ideas.

Students should be informed how to organize the what they have learned about a topic down on their paper. Additionally it is to be informed how to generate and find additional facts on a particular topic without adding extra information or creating irrelevant topic. They need to know how to make strong points, collect focused information.

Revising and editing.

For the assessment students should be skillful in both individual and group work. Content, clarity, form, style and errors should be analyzed in class. All students have responsibility for their own writing pieces. They should know their drawbacks on time, it will help them to correct their own mistake.

1. Gardener(2009) *Consciousness-raising in writing process. Language awareness in the classroom*(pp. 168-185) London Longman.

Rapid writing technique.

This technique is used for accessing students' prior knowledge, engage with content, review and reflect, begin to set direction for writing letters, essays and other assignments purposed on a specific subject-based cases. Its purposes are:

- help students to begin their writing and produce more writing;
- making them generate ideas for writing on any given topic, or in any subject area;
- help learners to organize their own ideas in the process.

Outcomes:

Students will be able to:

- rapidly generate fresh ideas about presented topics weather they are in any subject area;
- learn how to write down ideas without self-editing;
- try to complete writing on time, improve test-taking skills.

Tips:

-in order to use this strategy no endeavor is required. It is done for pre-while process, it can be used in a number of ways, including: prewriting; brainstorming for a specific question; or writing for reflection, and for other specific purposes.

-it can also be used as pre-reading strategy.

-this strategy can be used at the end of the lesson in order to know how the students understood the theme;

-by using rapid writing regularly,students will have some basic theories in particular topics.

-it is applicable when students are at their examination they can use it as a way of gathering ideas and note in order not to forget them at all.

-use rapid writing drafts to give students practice in proofreading and reviewing their writing for the flow of ideas.

Before writing there are some does for the teacher : assign a topic for the group, suggest other possible questions depending on the type of assignment it can be weather narrative or informative. It is additional and helpful for the students to be explained about the purpose of this activity. Teacher gives some questions based on the ideas of students which are going to be given in their writing. Then the classroom should be divided into groups of 4 to 6 students.

Students are asked to brainstorm individually or make notes for the topic, read the instructions before writing.

During the process teachers have to work with students by giving time to the students, ask them to pass their work to the person to their side, and add questions to the work of their peers. It should be given as while-activity and continues 3-5 minutes depending on the length of work. Have students continue until the work's original author takes the paper. By this way all the students in a group be aware of the other peers' work. Last, ask students to begin answering the questions or making suggestions regarding the questions they were asked by the other members of the group. Students are to answer some of the questions they were asked.

After the process teachers should use the edited work and the answers to the questions as the basis for their written assignment. Students are encouraged to answer to as many of the questions as possible when they have gotten their work on their hands and to use the questions and answers as the basis for answering to the questions to the written assignment. In this technique the students are motivated to work in a group and analyze their own writing by analyzing the questions given to them by their peers not by the teacher. Because it is more clear for them to understand what their groupmates mean.

Developing and organizing ideas.

As it is targeted to teach effective writers the students then are to asked to use collaborative strategies in order to sort the ideas and information they have gathered to make connections between the elements of the text, identify relations in information. This strategy is used to enable students the opportunity to reorganize, sort out, categorize, classify the database and cluster their notes. It helps to the students to identify the relationships and make connections accurately, select ideas and information for possible topics and subtopics for their own use. By this strategy students will be able to model critical and creative thinking strategies, learn more strategies which are effective for their writing process, reread own notes, gathered information and writing that are related to a specific writing task, learn how to organize ideas and information to focus the writing task.

There are some tips and resources for the classroom utilization, such as for webbing and mapping ideas include:

- clustering means looking for similarities among ideas, information or things, and grouping them according to characters.
- comparing-identifying similarities among ideas, data or things.
- contrasting-identifying differences information in topic.
- generalizing-describing the overall meaning of the topic based on the given information.
- outlining-organizing main ideas, information, and supportive details on the basis of relationship among collected information/
- relating- identifying the connection among the given date.
- sorting-arranging into chunks.
- trend-spotting- make clear relations among the things that are generally behave the same.

Extra support by the teacher is to provide students with relevant examples, such as graphic organizers which help them to guide in sorting and organizing their information and notes. For example: cluster or webs, sequence (charts), and compare. Have students to identify or create their own way of gathering ideas. Select a familiar topic or theme and make students discuss it together. Ask students what they already know about the topic, and questions about it. Encourage students to use their prior knowledge on their particular topic and make them sort out all, select relevant ones and write it down.

According to the theory by Faigley and Witte (1981) writers revisit their writing as they draft to add, delete and change ideas and information. There are specific strategies writers use to revise their writing. One strategy writers use is ARMS (add, remove, move, substitute)

It has a lot of benefits while writing. But the purpose of reorganizing ideas is to identify different strategies for reorganizing content, examine how the effectiveness of sentence and paragraph order. By using this strategy students will be able to organize writing effectively to different purposes in various subject areas, organize ideas and information for clarity and emphasis.

Tips and resources are ;

-revising the process of making sure that the writing says what the writer wants to say, here everything should be taken into consideration, from minor details to bigger ones. Teachers should give following questions:

-does it make sense?

-Is the topic clear?

-is the main idea clear?

-are there any topic disconnected to the topic or main idea?

Students are asked to write summarizing ideas, the main detail and analyze the paragraph. Identify strengths and weak points; strong topic sentence, supporting details, evidence to support main idea, strong words to convince, not enough facts and examples.

Asking questions to revise writing.

Students ask questions about the work of their friends' writing. They are asked to be more responsible for their own writing. The purpose of the strategy is to discuss the main ideas in a piece of writing to revise or analyze the ideas. By this way learners will be able to:

- organize meaningful discussion.

-develop peer evaluation ability.

-recognize that the writer's responsibilities for their own work.

There are many types and kinds of writing such as at the modern stage, teachers introduce the text type, purpose, audience, context of the text, grammar vocabulary. For example when the task includes to write a complaint letter to the local authority the text is taken from other sources, authentic material is given to the students before starting the process. Teachers can jumble

paragraphs, have students do some exercises with the group. Students can do pre-activities individually or in a small groups.

Students who want to determine to improve the quality of their writing skill are asked to be “prepared to change their habitual approach to writing”. Which means some students would need to move away from the information focused on approach to writing. Instead of it they should have awareness in writing purposefully. Some researches conclude that, socio-cognitive approach to writing can be effective in the enhancement of the student performance in writing English as a second language. There are some practical strategies for socio-cognitive approach.

Cognitive and genre theories are important approaches to teaching academic writing to students at upper level classes. This neglects socio-cultural factors, such as the target reader’s possible reaction to texts.

The genre approach to teaching writing focuses on rhetorical moves and organization structure, rather than the thinking processes that are involved in the enactment of the discourse moves. (Chandrasegaran, 2013)

2.Chandrasegaran A (2013) *Think your way to effective writing*. Singapore, Prentice hall
The prescriptive nature of a genre approach to writing may inhibit students’ creativity (Hyland, 2002).

Cognitive genre approaches has some limitations to writing. Chandrasegaran suggested that socio-cognitive approach to writing, which takes into account the socio-cultural contexts, thinking process in enacting each genre practice, and reader expectations, to overcome the shortcomings of the cognitive and genre approaches. In teaching writing process the use of socio-cultural approach has many positive results in improving the student’s writing. It is described as “longer, more complete, and qualitatively better. Thinking process, in knowledge transformation, are crucial in the implementation of socio-cognitive approach to writing. It helps students to organize ideas, write and revise their essays. It also helps to identify the relevant materials in learning how to write process.

Understanding features that make a text coherent.

In order to produce coherent texts the coherence of the students should be well-developed. Teachers should help students understand the meaning of coherence from a narrow sense for example connectedness between sentences or to a broader sense which means linking the ideas in a text at a discourse level to create meanings for the readers. It is said that the process of teaching coherence is difficult because it is an abstract theory to understand. But it can be taught effectively. It has three common types:

Macro structure-is about the outline of a text. For example the outline of the complaint letter is to complain about a situation-problem-solution-evaluation. Information structure is to give prior information before new one. Mustafa has two children. They are Lola and Ali. In this example the writer should have give “two children” then add names of them. It gives much more clearness to the sentence.

Proposition development- requires to give statement to writing. “Public transport is important for the inhabitants” should contain an additional information “by using them they are trying not to harm to the environment.

Cohesive devices-can help to connect sentences with each other. Examples of this device include pronouns, synonyms, antonyms, conjunctions, repetition.

Information structure- gives extra information about the topic without going too far from the topic.

Mediscourse markers- used for organizing, interpreting, avaluating information. Examples are logical connectives (therefore, but) sequencers (firstly, secondly, finally) certainty markers (certainly, undoubtedly) hedges (can, may, it could be, the case that)

Good editing strategies.

Carefully and well- built editing structure is an important in giving positive impression to the reader. Teachers can teach following structures for editing:

- students should try to finish their writing earlier before the last minute. It gives them a good chance of having time to analyze and edit the writing pieces. Successful writers know the worth of editing.

- it is advised to read written texts aloud. It is more effective than simply reading and problematic situations can be seen by this way. It may seem that some sentences are not well-developed or disconnected to other sentences.

- grammatical, spelling, typographical errors can be checked.

- using dictionary for checking errors.

- keeping log book for frequent errors and try to copy with them by learning more about them.

Teachers need to evaluate their students in order to encourage them to work more on their writing skills. At the end of the lesson teachers should have some concepts:

Make sure if the students have understood the theme.

Did they know about how to establish goal and purposes of the lesson?

Do the learners know about the functions of academic writing?

Did they understand the importance of their writing skill?

Plan activities that require students to identify the purpose of writing.

Socio- cognitive approach requires knowledge transformation skills. Writing teachers should consider that an effective essay can not be written in one draft. It is also vital for students to adopt self-editing strategies in all their written work. Self- editing would result in the improvement of students' self-responsibility.

Conclusion: there is no native standards for the second language learners. The steps to be effective writer can be taught by the teacher. Writing is complex activity. It should be practiced more and more. Even after multiple times of revision. This is a burden for the language teachers to develop this skill effectively by using specific strategies and techniques.

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