

INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE METHODS OF TEACHING AND  
IMPROVING STUDENT'S WRITING SKILLS

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**Annotation**

This article deals with the problems of teaching writing skills and finds out different effective methods of teaching writing. It discusses about ways of organizing writing lessons in different classes.

**Keywords:** grammatical structure, coherence, cohesion, PMI, KWL, T-Chart, Venn diagram, Graphic organizers, Rapid/Rocket writing, drawbacks.

It is known that teaching writing skills is one of the complex procedures for the English language teachers. Furthermore, it is also difficult for the learners to get good command over writing skills because of its complexity in spelling, grammatical structure, usage, coherence, organization and so on. As Rao P. S says, "The teachers should understand the level of the students and try to adopt relevant teaching strategies of improving their writing skills that are more suitable for them. Moreover, the tasks that they choose for this purpose should be well-known to the ELLs and they should create interest among the learners". Therefore, the teachers should always think of alternative methods, techniques and approaches to present them in the classrooms in order to make the learners understand the skills properly. For this purpose, the teachers should always adopt simple, useful and needful materials for the learners that create more interest among them.

The ability to communicate through written symbols is so basic to the concept of education that literacy is often defined as being able to read and write. Healthy and normal children learn to speak and understand spoken words before they come to school.

However, very few of them learn to read and write before that stage, at best the skills a child brings into school which relate to writing are unintelligible scribbling rough drawing, which relate to writing, they alone can interpret; as such teachers of pupils have the task of noticing and correcting them in the most appropriate way. The teacher should as much as possible use enough teaching materials, which will help the child to be able to handle writing materials and be creative while writing. They must also be alert to try new ways of teaching. As they listen to learn, speak to communicate,

read to discover and write to share ideas; he engages in creative communication, thus a new world is opened to him because they are able to interact with others.

In order to teach writing skills effectively, first of all, we must define what kind of writing should students do? Like many other aspects of English language teaching, the types of writing we get students do will depend on their age, interests and level. We can get beginners to write simple poems, but we probably will not give them an extended report on town planning to do. When we set tasks for elementary students, we will make sure that the students have or can get enough language to complete the task. Such students can write a simple story but they are not able to create a complex narrative. It is all a question what language the students have at their group and what can be achieved with this language. The models we give students to imitate should be chosen according to their abilities. In general, we will try to get students writing in a number of common everyday styles. These will include writing postcards, various kinds of letters, filling in forms such as job applications, writing narrative compositions, reports, newspaper and magazine articles etc. We may also want to have students write such text types as dialogues, play scripts, advertisements or poems, of course if we think these will motivate them.

Another factor, which can determine our choice of writing task, is the students' interests. Getting into consideration, their directions or field of their future specialties we can choose appropriate tasks for special deals. If we have mixed group students of different specialties, their interests will not be so easy to pin down. At this point, we will choose writing tasks, which we think, are generally useful but which, more importantly, they are likely to enjoy doing. For example, students of technical universities may never have a need to write a scene from a soap opera, but they might enjoy by doing it, so it is worth doing. There is no limit to the kinds of text we can ask students to write.

Our decisions though will be based on how well students know the language, what their interests are and what we think will not only be useful for them but also motivate them as well. This cyclical process when composing texts make writers move forwards and backwards: planning, actual writing on paper and revising, all these sub processes interacting with one another in contrast to the traditional linear step-by-step procedure of writing where the emphasis was given to the student's mastery of the code and certain subject matter. Although writing in general involves various stages, in reality however, the process of composing is not linear and writers do not follow a systematic sequence of rehearsing (planning), drafting (actual writing on paper) and revising but it is a recursive activity. Writing has been described as a recursive process, in which the writer plans, translates ideas into language, and reviews what has been written. As we have already mentioned previously, writers that are more skilled pay more attention to content and organization, while weaker writers are more preoccupied with the

mechanics of writing, especially spelling, punctuation and grammar. Good writers are found to use a longer pre-writing period than average writers do. The recursive nature of writing sees a writer moving between drafting and revising with stages of replanning in between and this going back and forth makes writing a process that leads to clarity». As a process, writing does not move in a straight line from conception to completion: not all planning is done before words are put on paper; all the words are not on paper before writers review and revise. Writers move back and forth among these sub processes» [2].

As Shaughnessy cited in Zamel “Writing can be explained as a process of exploring our own thoughts, the record of an idea developing. It is a process whereby an initial idea gets extended and refined» [3]. Writing is a complex process and can lead to learner frustration. As with speaking, it is necessary to provide a supportive environment for the students and be patient. Below mentioned activities will help to teach writing and make the process of writing more effective.

Graphic organizers are a really good way to get students planning what they are going to write before they actually begin the task of writing. Graphic organizers are a visual representation of the information they would like to include in their writing. Some examples are:

Venn diagram - these show relationships between two or more things. Venn diagrams are great for showing similarities and differences.

T-Chart - explores a topic with opposing views. Examples could include: likes/dislikes, before/after and advantages/disadvantages.

KWL - a way to record student’s knowledge on a topic before you begin and at the end of the topic. K-what students know; W-what students want to know; and Lwhat students learned.

PMI - used to record different views. P-plus, M-minus, I-interesting. This organizer can be used by students when giving feedback to other students about their work. Pass it on- this activity can be used in small groups. It is best to use a template for this to guide how much students write. Each student has a turn to write an introduction. They then pass this on to the next student in the circle. Students read the introduction and then write the middle of the text. Finally, with the last pass around the circle, each student reads the introduction and middle and then writes a conclusion. The writing is passed back to the original writer to read and share with the group.

Rapid/Rocket writing- the idea behind this is to get students to write down as much information as they can on a topic in a given time, without focusing on fixing spelling, grammar or other mistakes. Students should be provided with a time limit (such as 5 minutes). This could be the beginning of a series of lessons where the teacher focuses on different parts of the rapid writing, such as cohesion, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Drawbacks - it takes a lot of time and effort to write, and so it is only fair that student writing is responded to suitably. Positive comments can help build student confidence and create good feeling for the next writing class. It also helps if the reader is more than just the teacher. Class magazines, swapping letters with other classes, etc. can provide an easy solution to providing a real audience. Teachers should be facilitators and are responsible of creating the best possible conditions for learners.

Moreover, the English teachers have to adopt some more new techniques to improve the EFL/ESL learners' writing skills. When the teachers give a certain writing task to the learners, they have to suggest the learners how to express ideas and organize the given task. The teachers have to guide the learners with the process of writing that needs to divide the writing activity into several stages where each activity involves sub-skills in doing this process. Therefore, the teachers have to guide the learners properly in order to involve them in the activities with a lot of motivation and encouragement.

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