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Кафедра практики англійської мови та методики навчання

THEORETICAL GUIDE ON ENGLISH METHODOLOGY
MODULE "Preparing to Teach 2"
UNIT 3.4 "Language Skills – Teaching Writing"

Посібник з теорії методики навчання англійської мови
Модуль «Підготовка до вчителювання 2»
Розділ 3.4 «Мовленнєві навички- навчання письма»

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Укладачі:

Кваснецька Н.В. канд.пед.наук, доцент кафедри практики англійської мови та методики викладання

Гронь Л.В. канд.пед.наук, доцент кафедри практики англійської мови та методики викладання

Верьовкіна О.Є. канд.психол.наук, доцент кафедри практики англійської мови та методики викладання

Рецензенти:

Павелків К.М. доктор.пед.наук, професор кафедри іноземних мов РДГУ

Кочмар Д.А. канд. пед. наук, доц., завідувач кафедри іноземних мов МЕГУ

Відповідальний за випуск:

Михальчук Н.О. – доктор психологічних наук, професор, завідувач кафедри практики англійської мови та методики викладання іноземних мов Рівненського державного гуманітарного університету

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COURSE ESSENTIALS

English Language Teaching Methodology – Curriculum Map
Module 3. Preparing to Teach 2

Status: Compulsory
Year: 3
Semester: 5
Total hours: 120
Contact hours: 72
Self-study hours: 48
Credit 4

	UNITS	HOURS		
		Total	Contact	Self-study
Module 3		30	18	12
		30	18	12
		30	18	12
	3.4. Language Skills – Teaching Writing	30	18	12
	Module Total	**120**	**72**	**48**

Unit 3.4 Language Skills – Teaching Writing

Objectives

By the end of the unit, students will be aware of:

• curriculum requirements for teaching writing

• the types of writing and approaches to writing

• ways of teaching to write different text types

• writing activity sequences

and will be able to:

• integrate listening, speaking, reading and writing skills

• use strategies and techniques for developing learners' writing skills

• assess different types of learner's writing

• plan a sequence of activities that incorporates the development of writing skills.

Content

• Curriculum requirements for teaching writing to different age groups
• Strategies for developing learners' writing skills

• Teaching writing using process and product approaches

• Ways of teaching writing different text types (e.g. postcards, invitations, CVs, personal and formal letters, e-mails, stories, reviews, articles, essays, recipes, reports)

• Teaching sentence, paragraph and text building; coherence (logical development of ideas) and cohesion (link words and phrases, sequence of sentences) in writing

• Approaches to assessing writing and giving feedback on learners' writing

• Writing activity sequences

• Ways of integrating listening, speaking, reading and writing skills

Theoretical Guide

FIVE BASIC WRITING SKILLS STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN EARLY ON

Basic Writing Skills for Kids

Basic writing skills are one of the most valuable lessons children can learn from a young age. Developing writing skills early on helps kids as they progress through school and allows them to grasp grammatical concepts more easily.Most importantly, basic writing skills are a hugely important quality for older students and adults to have (regardless of their career path) – so it only makes sense to start this process as early as possible!Whether you're teaching basic grammar skills, spelling, sentence and paragraph structure, or any other writing rules, kids will get more out of the lessons the earlier they start. If you're ready to help your students begin learning, read on to learn more about which skills are most important for students to have and how to use writing prompts to help kids develop their writing skills.

Proper Spelling and Punctuation

One of the first challenges young students face when learning how to write is understanding how to use proper spelling and punctuation.This should come as no surprise – written language is very different than spoken language and has its own unique rules. Furthermore, the English language is notorious for its challenging quirks and many inconsistencies. However, proper spelling and punctuation are the foundation for all effective written communication and it's imperative for kids to learn them (even in the age of spellcheck and autocorrect!).

Good Reading Comprehension

Before kids can write, they need to be able to read – which is why good reading comprehension is such an important skill to have. Reading comprehension entails many things, but at its root, it is the ability to read a piece of writing and effectively glean its meaning.

For young students, that means they need to be able to:

Read and know the meaning of many of the words in the text

Sound out or somehow look up the meaning of words they don't know

Understand how the words in a sentence, paragraph, or full piece of work relate to one another – and what they mean when taken as a whole entity.

Once kids have begun to grasp the concept of reading at a base level, they should also begin learning how to think critically about the work and infer meaning from what is or isn't said as a part of good reading comprehension.

Sentence and Paragraph Structure

In order to further develop their basic writing skills, students must also learn about the structure of writing – namely, how to construct a proper sentence and paragraph.

This skill is aided substantially through reading practice, but it's especially important to focus on it deliberately because it is an area of writing many children struggle with. As kids learn to write, they often have a tough time with things like proper tense, placing modifiers and verbs in the correct places, or writing incomplete and run-on sentences.In order to help develop this skill, be sure to teach your students about the various parts of speech and the role that different types of sentences (declarative, descriptive, inquisitive, etc.) play in writing.

Knowledge of Different Types of Writing

Once students have a firmer grasp on composing clear sentences and paragraphs, they can begin learning about different types and genres of writing. To communicate effectively, students should be able to write in different styles and tailor their messages to an appropriate audience.

For example, if a student is writing a short story, the work should include aspects like a setting, plot, dialogue, character descriptions, and a resolution or ending. A research essay should include a thesis statement, facts, supporting arguments, and citations – while a persuasive essay should also include appeals to logic or emotion that would be out of place in a more academic piece of writing.

Ultimately, learning when and how to use various elements in a given piece of work is an important basic writing skill that all young students should learn.

Editing and Rewriting

Experienced writers will tell you that above all else, writing is rewriting – which means that the first draft of anything is very rarely what should make it out into the world. Truly quality writing is born in the revision process, and thus, the ability to edit and rewrite is perhaps the most important basic writing skill of all that kids should learn.The need to edit and rewrite a piece of writing might sound like extra work to kids, but it can actually make the overall process of writing much easier. Knowing that you will go back later to

edit a piece can be freeing, as it removes a lot of the pressure to make it perfect from the beginning.Instead, kids can simply begin pouring their ideas out on the page and see where their pens take them – and then they can go back, step-by-step, to make corrections and improvements to further develop their writing.

It is essential that children develop basic writing skills at a young age. Writing skill development at a younger age helps kids as they progress through school. Moreover, when kids start writing practice at an early age, they tend to grasp concepts more easily.Whether teachings are about basic grammar skills, correct spelling, sentence, and paragraph structure, or any other writing rules and skills, the sooner the learning starts and the more in-depth the lessons are, the more kids are going to get out of it.

Some Basic Writing Skills Benefits

Early development

At a young age, kids learn easily through various tools and developmental teachings. Using imaginative reasoning, rather than sitting them down in front of the chalkboard is a superior teaching method.For example, using flashcards with pictures, fun books, and videos, as well as different color pens and pencils to teach children about grammar rules or sentence structures, are all great options to use with young kids. Due to their shorter attention span, the basic writing skills that are taught must be easy to grasp and understand.

Creative skills

Creative writing should also be a part of the education kids receive relative to basic writing skills. Imagination and creativity are not only going to help them develop their writing, but they will also help kids engage more in learning this valuable life skill. Having children create characters, scenes, plots, or an imaginative storyline as part of their learning experiences will help them to engage more deeply in the process of learning to write.

Structure and Form

Proper writing structure, sentence formation, punctuation, paragraph breaks, sentence breaks, and other basic writing skills must be taught to children. To do so, the use of games is a great tool for teachers or parents to use. Fun is a great way to teach kids the most basic writing rules that are required as they develop their writing mastery.

No matter how you choose to teach kids to write, it is best if you start as early as possible. The sooner the better if you ask us! Additionally, when you start with fun, basic, and imaginative learning tools kids are going to be more inclined to engage in learning basic writing skills.

Whether it is at home or at school, using fun teaching methods to get the most basic writing skills down is the best way to start when you are teaching basic writing skills to kids.

(Adapted from: Harmer, J. (2004) How to Teach Writing. Longman. Available from: https://www.journalbuddies.com/writing-2/writing-short-stories/)

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS? DO YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW TO WRITE CORRECT SENTENCES WITHOUT IT BEING A PAINFUL TASK?

Here are some tips to help you feel more confident with writing, and improve your English writing skills:

1. Read as much as you can

Just as we say that listening is closely related to speaking, reading is closely related to writing so our number 1 tip for improving your English writing would be to read as much as you can! This will help you improve your vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and show you there are many different ways to communicate ideas. For example: If you need to write a description of a house or a bio of yourself, a great idea is to read some other bios or house descriptions, from books, magazines, brochures, the internet or whatever source you can think of. After having read others, then you can attempt to write your own. You'll realize it's much easier than trying to write without any previous input!

2. Keep an English dictionary

You'll be able to look up words to clarify their meaning and to learn antonyms and synonyms so as not to repeat words or phrases, which will better your communication skills.

3. Brush up your grammar

Even though you don't have to "study" grammar, your English writing will improve a lot if you work on grammar exercises. Also, remember that grammar is more important when you write than when you speak because it is usually more formal and more structured.

4. Check your spelling before and after writing

How do you feel when you read something full of spelling mistakes in your own language? Poor spelling can spoil an otherwise interesting piece to read, and we generally write for other people to read what we've written.

5. Keep a diary in English

It will make you write every day to turn writing into a routine activity. Besides, you are "writing to yourself", which can make you feel liberated and satisfied. You don't need to write elaborate sentences: you can keep them as simple as you want.

6. Learn how to expand your basic sentences into more elaborate ones

There are five basic sentence structures in English:

Subject – Verb (*John studies; My friend is playing*)

Subject – Verb – Object (*I like apples; Mary reads novels*)

Subject –Verb – Adjective (*Jenny is happy; Linda is pretty*)

Subject – Verb – Adverb (*She speaks fluently; These flowers are everywhere*)

Subject – Verb – Noun (*My father was a chemist, You are a student*)

Here are a few examples of how you can expand them:

John, my brother, studies at home. My long-life friend is always playing.

These small white flowers are everywhere during the summer. My father, who passed away several years ago, was a well-known chemist.

7. Learn how to organize a paragraph

An useful way to improve your English writing skills is to start your paragraphs with ***a topic sentence***: i.e. a sentence that explains what you are going to write about. Continue with ***supporting sentences***: i.e. sentences that provide more information about the topic. Finish with ***a conclusion***: i.e. it is generally a summary of the ideas developed in the body of the paragraph. ***Learn how to make transitions*** between paragraphs to signal relationships between ideas so as to create a fluent body of text.

8. Write an outline

Even in a very simple piece of English writing you have to keep some kind of an organization to convey the message you want in a clear orderly way. There are many different ways to write outlines and these have much to do with the way you organize things in your mind.

9. Try to get someone to read what you've written

A teacher, a tutor, a native speaker: whoever masters the language and can help you understand and correct whatever mistakes you may have made both in grammar or spelling and in the way your paragraph text has been organized.

Writing in English is not really something you can achieve immediately, but with hard, efficient work and gradual improvement you should definitely get there. Start writing very simple sentences and then get the challenge to write more elaborate pieces. Just give it a try!

(Adapted from: Grabowski, J. (1996). Writing and speaking: Common grounds and differences toward a regulation theory of written language production.)

WHAT ARE WRITING SKILLS?

Writing skills are your child's ability to express thoughts and ideas in writing. Your child will begin by scribbling or drawing simple shapes. He will then start to write letters. When he understands how to combine and break apart letters to form words, he is developing writing skills. Your child needs strong writing skills to be successful throughout school.

How may my child's writing skills develop through grade 3?

Children learn to write by drawing and scribbling first. This happens during the toddler years. Your child may start by copying shapes, such as circles. He may enjoy making marks or scribbles and asking you what he wrote. This shows that he is developing an understanding of how writing works. By the time he is ready for preschool, he will be making letters instead of scribbles. In school, he will learn to put letters together to form words. Each grade from kindergarten through grade 3 will help your child learn new writing skills:

Kindergarten skills include learning to break down words based on their sounds. This is called phonics. He may be able to use phonics to spell and write some words. He may also be able to write his first and last name and names of people he knows.

First grade skills include learning how words represent spoken language. He may know where sentences and paragraphs begin and end. He may know the difference between punctuation marks, such as a period and a question mark. He may be able to count syllables in a word, and put together and break apart sounds in 1-syllable words. He may also start to know the spelling of some irregular words, such as said .

Second grade skills include increasing vocabulary and spelling skills. He will learn to spell words that have unusual spellings. He may learn suffixes and prefixes. He may also learn synonyms (words with the same meaning) and antonyms (words with opposite meanings). He may learn the parts of speech. Your child's teacher will begin to have each child read aloud in class. By the end of second grade, your child should be able read words that have more than 2 syllables. Other skills include being able to recall

information he read and making connections among different words. He should also be able to use capital letters and punctuation correctly.

   Third grade skills include fluency. Fluency means reading and writing with speed and accuracy. Your child may learn how to use a dictionary. He will learn to write for different purposes and readers, and how to revise his writing. He will build on these skills in grades 4 through 12. By the end of third grade, your child will be starting adolescence. He will have more complex writing assignments in school. Ask your child's healthcare provider for more information on writing skills in adolescents.

(Adapted from White, R. and V. Arndt (1991) Process Writing. Longman Books for Teachers. :)

WHAT CAN LEARNERS DO AT EACH LEVEL?

Advanced

C2

Can write clear, smoothly flowing, complex texts in an appropriate and effective style. Can use a logical structure which helps the reader find the main points.

C1

Can write clear, well-structured, detailed texts on complex subjects, showing the important issues, giving examples and writing a conclusion if appropriate. Can use the correct style of writing relevant to the target reader.

Intermediate

B2

Can write clear, detailed texts on different subjects. Can use information and arguments from other sources in their writing.

B1

Can write straightforward texts about familiar topics or simple information and ideas. Can link sentences into a connected text.

Beginner

A2

Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences, linked with words like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.

A1

Can write personal information (e.g. likes and dislikes, family, pets) using simple words, phrases and sentences.

Pre- A1

Can write basic personal information (e.g. name, address, nationality), perhaps with the use of a dictionary.

(Adapted from: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, pp. 9-10
Available from: www.coe.int/lang-CEFR)

Theoretical Guide

MOTIVATING YOUR STUDENTS TO WRITE: TOP 3 TEACHING STRATEGIES

Of course, the first step to helping any student become a published author is getting them to write – which, as many things are, is often easier said than done. Motivation to write isn't always easy to come by, even for full-time authors – let alone young writers still finding their literary feet. But for your elementary students, these three teaching strategies can be the key to revving up their creative engines and directing their boundless energy toward telling their own stories and sharing them with the world.

Strategy 1: Encourage Growth, Not Perfectionism

When teaching writing basics, it can be all too easy to get caught up in proofreading for grammatical errors and focusing the majority of your effort on correcting mistakes and misspellings. While it's certainly crucial that your elementary students become familiar with the fundamental rules of writing early on, it's also important to make sure you're not simply training your students to see only what's wrong with their writing. Seeing only the negatives, never the positives, is draining and demoralizing. To maximize enjoyment of the writing process, be sure to:

- *Frame the discussion around the editing stage of the writing process in a positive light*. Explain how revising is an opportunity to learn and grow, not merely a means of identifying problems with their writing. Remind them, too, that everyone makes mistakes, and that every author goes through this part of the process, no matter how famous or talented they may be.

- *Encourage your students to create first, then edit later*. If your students are worrying about the red marks they're going to get on their papers before the first word is even written, writing is quickly going to start feeling more like a dreaded obligation than a joyous act of creation. When brainstorming or scribbling down a rough draft, encourage your students to explore and experiment with ideas without fear of failure. Let them know that it's okay to have fun at this stage and get a little out there. Revisions are for after the first draft, not before!

Strategy 2: Make it Personal

Boring prompts or unrelatable topics can make the writing process dull. Do your best to choose subjects that will either speak to something close to your students' hearts and experiences or excite their imaginations. Try to stick to topics that do at least one of the following:

- *Address personal experiences or interests.* Asking your students directly about something they care about, such as the best ice cream flavor they ever tasted or their favorite superhero, allows them to ease into writing by giving them familiar ground on which to build their response.

- *Inspire thoughtful answers.* Especially for students who have already mastered the basics, the best way to get (and keep!) your students writing is to provide them with a topic that inspires more than a cursory answer. Foster creativity and originality. Imaginative writing prompts are the best way to allow your students to let loose and have fun with their writing. These don't have to be fairy tale story starters or even fiction-based to qualify as imaginative, either. What matters is that the topic is something that motivates them to wonder, invent or explore.

Strategy 3: Help Your Students Feel Like "Real Authors"

The number one strategy to motivate your students to write is to make them feel like their writing matters. Nothing is more frustrating to a writer, young or old, than feeling like your writing "doesn't count." Show your students how much you—and others—value their work by:

- *Providing them with meaningful feedback.* Take the time to guide your students through each step of the writing process. When grading their work, include commentary along with proofreading marks, and be sure to point out what they've done well as well as what can be improved. Include time for peer editing, when possible, to encourage your students to exchange ideas and inspire one another.

- *Displaying and celebrating their hard work.* Nothing says "real author" like actually publishing a professionally bound book. Seeing their writing in print is a powerful tool when it comes to convincing your students once and for all that their writing matters. You may also want to consider planning a publishing party to help your students see themselves as you see them: young authors capable of accomplishing just about anything.

Motivating Your Students to Find the Joy in Writing

Motivating your students to write at such an early age can seem like a bit of a challenge. But there are 14 million student authors out there who are living proof that it is possible—and, ultimately, deeply

rewarding. By fostering creative growth, exploring relevant themes and helping them become proud, published authors, you can help your elementary students move past writer's block and find their own personal writing motivation.

(Adapted from: Zamel, V. (1987). Writing: The Process of Discovering Meaning. In Long, M.H., and Richards, J.C. (eds.), Methodology in TESOL. A book of readings. New York: Newbury House)

HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK ON STUDENT WRITING

1. NARROW THE FOCUS

When responding to writing, we need to think about what we *really* want our students to know. We can't comment on everything because students won't learn all the things like we hope they will. Instead, we can provide fewer comments that are meaningful suggestions worded in a way that are sensitive to students' perceptions.

For example, if a student's essay is full of spelling errors, it's not necessary to circle every word (although it may be tempting to do so). Why not just write, "Please check spelling throughout the essay" or "Please ask a parent help you spell check"? These comments are more positive.

2. ASK QUESTIONS INSTEAD OF MAKING STATEMENTS

Research shows that asking questions is more beneficial to learning than making statements. Questions push people to figure out answers on their own. In terms of wanting to influence students' self talk in a positive way, consider the following.Maybe you notice a student's essay is wrought with run-ons. Would it be more beneficial to…

State: "There are run-ons in every paragraph. Proofread more carefully." **OR**….

Ask: "Where might you insert end marks to help the audience follow your line of thinking more easily? Please review the notes on sentence errors and then make some revisions."

3. CONFER WITH STUDENTS

It's a lot easier to word suggestions in a positive manner if you are speaking with the student. In writing, it's more difficult to infer tone, and it's easier to write something that is brash than it is to speak it. Talking with students is one way to get to know them better as writers and as people.Students need to feel a genuine relationship with their teacher in order to really be vulnerable and accept suggestions for improvement. Plus, conferring with students means we spend less time grading a mountain of papers. During conferring, we can word suggestions kindly to build students' optimistic self-talk.

4. USE A ONE-TO-ONE RATIO

Students will be more receptive to constructive feedback when it's balanced with praise. Point out students' strengths. Tell them what they did well. If you can't find enough strengths in their writing, it's probably a good idea just to help them develop one goal to work on for improvement. Anything else would be overwhelming…and it might make them feel incapable.Plus, how many things can a student work on improving at the same time and *truly* master? A one-to-one ratio is a good goal to begin with if you're not used to balancing feedback. Begin with the positive.

5. KEEP FEEDBACK TIMELY

When talking about how to give feedback on student writing, the answer is often in the timing. It can be difficult to provide feedback quickly after students submit an essay. However, when we allow too much time to pass, the feedback is no longer relevant to students. That's a problem when we want our feedback to build confidence while also encouraging students to want to grow.Helping students develop their writing skills requires a trusting relationship between teacher and pupil. If a student can't depend on the teacher to return an essay within a reasonable amount of time, why would they trust us when we offer suggestions for improvement? What are we really saying when we don't hand back feedback for two months after students submit an essay? What message does that convey?

6. JUST READ

The answer to the question of how to respond to student writing may be much more simple than it seems. The first time you look at a student's essay, just read it. Take time to reflect on what you read before making any comments. This strategy will help you to write only the things that matter most and reduce time nit-picking every error.Sometimes when responding to writing, our impulse is to point out every imperfection, but that doesn't help the student or us as teachers. Just put away the pen for the first reading, and then balance positive and constructive feedback as you note the most important goals for each student.

7. ASK STUDENTS TO REFLECT

One important step in helping students improve their internal dialogue is allowing them to find their own mistakes. It's true, students won't find everything you will. But, when we provide them with a rubric we have carefully explained and referenced in advance, they should be able to pinpoint areas where they can grow.

Understanding how students view their writing will help us in two ways:

1. We will be aware of what students think their strengths and weaknesses are. In this way, if they think their ideas are excellent, we know that we need to have a conversation with them about how content can be improved rather than writing feedback in the margins and giving them an "unsatisfactory" rating for that component.

2. It prepares students to accept help. If they know their writing isn't perfect, they will be less likely to negatively internalize suggestions for improvement.

8. BE SPECIFIC

It's easy to rush through grading papers and leave vague comments like "awkward" or "confusing." Yet, those comments don't help students, and they typically are not internalized positively. A more helpful approach would be to leave kind, specific suggestions. For example, "Can you clarify this argument? I'm not sure what you mean here" or "Is the hotdog driving the car? Try rewording the sentence to clarify." Even when we are leaving good feedback, it helps to be specific. Rather than, "good" or "love this!" try writing, "This sentence really emphasizes the importance of the research" or "This transition is so helpful for readers to follow your line of thinking."

9. CLARIFY THE AUDIENCE'S VIEW

Instead of pointing out what the writer did wrong, focus on what might confuse readers. For instance, will the audience be confused about how the hook relates to the thesis? You could ask, "What is the connection between the hook and the thesis? Can you help readers understand how they relate in the bridge?" Another example might be if a student only cites direct quotes in the essay and does not paraphrase research. You could write, "How many of the sentences in this paragraph are in your own wording? How might you revise so that the audience will be able to hear *your voice* coming through?" Focusing on what the readers *need* instead of what the writer *did wrong* is another way we can be sensitive to students' internal dialogue.

10. HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THEMSELVES

What we stress in our feedback shapes how students view their writing abilities. It's important that our feedback leads students to a point where they can see their own strengths and weaknesses. Pointing out patterns can be useful because students are not usually able to observe these patterns about themselves.

To illustrate, maybe a student is a talented writer, but he or she is consistently verbose. We can show students these areas for growth through our feedback.

I love how you take time to select words that are meaningful and precise. I can tell you put a lot of time and effort into writing sentences that are mature. I'm proud of you! Here is one area for growth I'd like you to consider: How can you maintain your personal style and your impressive word choice while also being more concise so that readers are can follow along easier?

Alternatively, give students your feedback, but don't attach it to a grade. Allow them to let the feedback (using the tips above) sink in and reflect on their own areas for growth according to the rubric. Responding to writing in a way that improves students' internal dialogue and respects their readiness levels is hard. The best approach is for us to put ourselves in our students' shoes. What would we want or not want a teacher to tell us?

(Adapted from: Chaudron, C. (1984). The effects of feedback on students' composition revisions. RELC Journal, 15, 1-14.)

ERROR CORRECTION

When it comes to error correction we are dealing with one individual's reaction to a student's piece of writing or utterance. This inevitably means that there will be some disagreement among teachers about what, when, and how to correct.

- Attitudes to error correction
- Categorising errors
- A model for correcting writing
- The role of planning
- Practical techniques / ideas for correcting writing

Attitudes to error correction

Attitudes to error correction vary not only among teachers but also among students. A teacher may be influenced by:

- The fact that English is their second language and great emphasis was placed on correctness at their teacher training college.
- The fact that as a native speaker they have never had to worry about their English.
- A particular methodology / approach. In the 1960s a teacher using Audiolingualism would have adopted a behaviourist approach to error. More recently a teacher following the Natural Approach (influenced by second language acquisition theory) would have adopted a wholly different approach. Other methodologies / approaches, such as Suggestopaedia and Total Physical Response, highlight the psychological effects of error correction on students.

As for students, we not only have to consider their age but also their approach to learning. Some students are risk-takers, while others will only say something if they are sure it is correct. While being a risk-taker is generally positive as it leads to greater fluency, some students only seem to be concerned with fluency at the expense of accuracy. The same can be true when it comes to writing. Some students take an eternity to produce a piece of writing as they are constantly rubbing out what they have written while at the opposite extreme the writing is done as fast as possible without any planning or editing.

Categorising errors

- We can categorise an error by the reason for its production or by its linguistic type.

What's the reason for the error?
  - It is the result of a random guess (pre-systematic).
  - It was produced while testing out hypotheses (systematic).
  - It is a slip of the tongue, a lapse, a mistake (caused by carelessness, fatigue etc.) (post-systematic).

To be sure about the type of error produced by a student we need to know where the student's interlanguage is (the language used by a student in the process of learning a second language).

- What type is it?

We can classify errors simply as productive (spoken or written) or receptive (faulty understanding). Alternatively we can use the following:
  - A lexical error - vocabulary
  - A phonological error - pronunciation
  - A syntactic error- grammar
  - An interpretive error - misunderstanding of a speaker's intention or meaning
  - A pragmatic error - failure to apply the rules of conversation

A model for correcting writing

When writing we do not have the chance to rephrase or clarify what we are saying. Our message must be clear the first time. Written errors are also less tolerated than spoken errors outside the classroom.

Look at this model for correcting written work and evaluate it for your teaching situation.

1. Comprehensibility
  - Can you understand the output?
  - Are there areas of incoherence?
  - Do these affect the overall message?
  - Does communication break down?
2. Task
  - Has the student addressed the task?
3. Syntax and Lexis
  - Are they appropriate to the task?
  - Are they accurate?

The role of planning

Giving students time to plan not only results in a wider range of language being used, it also helps students to avoid some of the following:
  - Inappropriate layout
  - No paragraphs
  - Lack of cohesion
  - Inappropriate style

Whichever style of plan (linear notes or a mind map) these questions will help students to plan their writing:
  - What am I going to write? (An informal letter etc.)
  - What layout do I need?
  - What information am I going to include?
  - How many paragraphs do I need?
  - What grammar / vocabulary am I going to use?
  - What linking words (because, and etc.) am I going to use?

Practical techniques / ideas for correcting writing

- Training students to edit

Even though they have invested time in doing a writing task, students often don't spend a few more minutes checking their writing. The following activities not only help to develop students' editing skills in a fun way, but also enable the teacher to focus on key errors without individual students losing face.
  - Grammar auctions: Students receive a number of sentences taken from their written work. Some are correct, some wrong. Students in groups have to try to buy the correct ones in the auction. They have a limited amount of money. The team with the most correct sentences wins.

o   Mistakes mazes: Students have a list of sentences. Their route through a maze depends on whether the sentences are right or wrong. They follow white arrows for correct sentences and black ones for incorrect ones. If they have identified all the sentences correctly they escape, if not they have to retrace their steps and find out where they went wrong.

- Correction techniques

It can be difficult to decide on what and how much to correct in a student's piece of writing. Students can develop a negative attitude towards writing because their teacher corrects all their errors or if the teacher only corrects a few, they might feel that the teacher hasn't spent sufficient time looking at their work. Evaluate the following techniques and decide which would be appropriate for your teaching situation. Underline inappropriate language in a piece of writing using a specific colour.

o   Using a different colour from above, underline examples of appropriate language.

o   Correct errors by writing the correct forms in their place.

o   Use codes in the margin to identify the type of error(s), for example, VOC = a lexical error. Students have to identify the error(s) and if possible make a correction.

o   Alternatively put crosses in the margin for the number of errors in each line. Students then try to identify the errors and make corrections.

o   Put students into pairs / groups. They correct each other's work using one or more of the techniques above.

o   From time to time give students an individual breakdown of recurring problems in their written work.

(From: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/en/professional-development/teachers/knowing-subject/articles/error-correction-1)

SESSION 3. Teaching sentence, paragraph and text building, coherence (logical development of ideas) and cohesion (linguistic means of establishing coherence) in writing

Theoretical Guide

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Writing as a channel of foreign language learning: it reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms and vocabulary that our students have been learning. Thus, some writing exercises might be introduced to consolidate language already presented and practiced orally.

Writing as a goal of foreign language learning: students will have to communicate with other people in writing, that is why we could include some writing tasks (which have whole pieces of communication as their outcome, rather than isolated sentences) to help learners develop the skills of communicating in writing. This is something they might need in their future social, educational, personal, or professional lives, when they have to fill out forms, write letters (formal, informal) and postcards, give written instructions, take down notes, write telephone messages, etc.

There are two structures to learn in English that are important in writing: the sentence and the paragraph. Paragraphs can be described as a collection of sentences. These sentences combine to express a specific idea, main point, topic and so on. A number of paragraphs are then combined to write a report, an essay, or even a book. In general, the purpose of a paragraph is to express one main point, idea or opinion. Of course, writers may provide multiple examples to support their point. However, any supporting details should support the main idea of a paragraph.

This main idea is expressed through three sections of a paragraph:
1) Beginning - Introduce your idea with a topic sentence
2) Middle - Explain your idea through supporting sentences
3) End - Make your point again with a concluding sentence, and, if necessary transition to the next paragraph.

Example Paragraph

Here is a paragraph taken from an essay on various strategies required for an overall improvement of student performance. The components of this paragraph are analyzed below:

Have you ever wondered why some students can't seem to concentrate in class? Students require more recreational time in order to better focus on lessons in class. In fact, studies have shown that students who enjoy a recess of more than 45 minutes consistently score better on tests immediately following the recess period. Clinical analysis further suggests that physical exercise greatly improves the ability to focus on academic materials. Longer periods of recess are clearly required to allow students the best possible chances of success in their studies. Clearly, physical exercise is just one of the necessary ingredients for improving student scores on standardized tests.

There are four sentence types used to construct a paragraph:

Hook and Topic sentence

A paragraph begins with an optional hook and a topic sentence. The hook is used to draw readers into the paragraph. A hook might be an interesting fact or statistic, or a question to get the reader thinking. While not absolutely necessary, a hook can help your readers begin thinking about your main idea. The topic sentence which states your idea, point, or opinion. This sentence should use a strong verb and make a bold statement.

(hook) Have you ever wondered why some students can't seem to concentrate in class?

(topic sentence) Students require more recreational time in order to better focus on lessons in class.

Notice the strong verb 'require' which is a call to action. A weaker form of this sentence might be: *I think students probably need more recreational time ...* This weaker form is inappropriate for a topic sentence.

Supporting sentences

Supporting sentences (notice the plural) provide explanations and support for the topic sentence (main idea) of your paragraph.

In fact, studies have shown that students who enjoy a recess of more than 45 minutes consistently score better on tests immediately following the recess period. Clinical analysis further suggests that physical exercise greatly improves the ability to focus on academic materials.

Supporting sentences provide the evidence for your topic sentence. Supporting sentences that include facts, statistics and logical reasoning are much more convincing that simple statements of opinion.

Concluding sentence

The concluding sentence restates the main idea (found in your topic sentence) and reinforces the point or opinion.

Longer periods of recess are clearly required to allow students the best possible chances of success in their studies.

Concluding sentences repeat the main idea of your paragraph in different words.

Optional Transitional sentence for Essays and Longer Writing

The transitional sentence prepares the reader for the following paragraph.

Clearly, physical exercise is just one of the necessary ingredients for improving student scores on standardized tests.

Transitional sentences should help readers logically understand the connection between your current main idea, point or opinion and the main idea of your next paragraph. In this instance, the phrase 'just one of the necessary ingredients ...' prepares the reader for the next paragraph which will discuss another necessary ingredient for success.

(Adapted from: Evans, V. (1998) Successful Writing Proficiency. Express Publishing. Available from: https://www.thoughtco.com/topic-sentence-composition-1692551)

DEFINING COHERENCE IN WRITING

Coherence in writing is the logical bridge between words, sentences, and paragraphs. Coherent writing uses devices to connect ideas within each sentence and paragraph. Main ideas and meaning can be difficult for the reader to follow if the writing lacks coherence.

Coherence Between Words

Between each word, coherence can be created by parallelism. *Parallel structure* means using similar grammatical constructions between words in sentences. Parallelism is particularly important for words in lists. If you're writing a list of things someone likes to do, then each activity in the list should take the same grammatical form. For instance, if one verb in the list takes on the '-ing' gerund form, like 'running,' then the other verbs in the list should also be in the gerund form. An incoherent structure would be to say:

Sarah likes to jump, running, and skate.

Instead, the list should be parallel like this:

Sarah likes jumping, running, and skating.

Coherence Between Sentences

Coherence can be created between sentences through repetition and transitional devices. Repetition of words across sentences helps to reiterate the same ideas between sentences. One way to use repetition to create coherence is to repeat the same word or phrase at the end of one sentence and the beginning of the next sentence to show how the ideas connect. Here is an example of sentences that create coherence through repetition:

The most important part of an essay is the thesis statement. The thesis statement introduces the argument of the essay. The thesis statement also helps to create a structure for the essay.

In this example, the repetition of the phrase 'thesis statement' helps to unify the three sentences. It is a phrase that ends the first sentence and transitions into the next sentence by starting with that same phrase.

Another way to create coherence between sentences is through *transitional devices*. There are many types of transitional devices that show time and help ideas flow smoothly. Transitional words, such as 'first', 'later', and 'then', are a few examples of transitional devices that show time to help ideas flow more smoothly. Transitional devices are like signposts that tell the reader what is coming up ahead and where the discussion is going.

Coherence Between Paragraphs

Transitional words can also be used between paragraphs. Words such as:

- Therefore
- However
- Yet
- Thus
- First
- Later
- Then

can not only be used between sentences, but between paragraphs to connect them. Other ways to create coherence between paragraphs include having a consistent paragraph structure and point of view. The structure of a coherent paragraph includes a topic sentence, which focuses on the main idea. The topic sentence usually comes first in a paragraph. The topic sentence is followed by supporting sentences that develop the idea, and finally, a concluding sentence to tie it all together. Transitional words then bridge the gap between paragraphs, and the structure starts anew with another topic sentence for the next paragraph. Finally, consistent point of view is a way to create coherence between paragraphs.

What is "Coherence and Cohesion"?

Coherence and cohesion are paired together because if your paragraphs are structured well, they should also flow logically. Let's take a look at each of these criteria in detail. Although they may seem like a mystery, Coherence and Cohesion actually refer to the structure and flow of your essay and its paragraphs. Structure means how your essay and paragraphs are organised, and flow means that your ideas are connected logically and skilfully.

Coherence

Simply put, coherence means "structure" (paragraph and essay structure).

To get a high score in Coherence and Cohesion, your essay and paragraphs should follow the structure below:

Introduction Structure

The introduction tells the reader what the essay is about and what it will do
- General statement about the topic
- Specific statement about the topic
- Thesis statement (what the essay will do)

Paragraph Structure

Each paragraph should have one central idea
- Introduce the central idea
- Explain the central idea
- Give an example to illustrate the central idea
- Conclude the central idea

Conclusion Structure

The conclusion restates the thesis and summarizes what the essay did
- Restate thesis
- Summarize what the essay did
- Give an opinion/recommendation/prediction

The central idea of each body paragraph should be linked back to the thesis statement in your introduction and should be reiterated in your conclusion.

Cohesion

Cohesion means *flow*. This is how well your ideas follow from one to the next with seamless and logical transition. As you develop your paragraph, your ideas must be related to each other and they should be logically linked with referencing and linking words.

Referencing words refer to pronouns, like *this, these, it*, etc. You can use these to link an idea in one sentence to an idea in the previous sentence.

Another way to connect ideas is to use *linking words*. These are words like *however, on the other hand, for example, therefore*, etc. But be careful! Like salt and pepper, you should use these sparingly. You should not include more than two of these kinds of words in your paragraph. Overusing them will bring your coherence and cohesion band score down.

The best way to develop your writing skills and to enhance the coherence and cohesion of your essay is through *feedback*. So, to learn how to write well-structured paragraphs and skilfully connect your ideas with a logical flow.

When teachers plan their writing activities they have to consider the level of their students and the difficulty of the task. We could mention two different ways of grading writing tasks:

Teaching and Assessing Writing Skills

1) According to the length. Much of the writing tasks in an elementary level class is at the sentence level and their texts are usually limited to just a few sentences. Then, students gradually produce longer and more elaborate texts.

2) According to the degree of control the task exercises over the student's expression. Writing tasks for beginners tend to be fairly controlled; as they progress and improve their writing, teachers often guide them in many different ways before they are asked to write something freely.

Hence, we can distinguish three types of writing activities: controlled, guided, and free.

(Adapted from: Harmer, J. (2004) How to Teach Writing. Longman.)

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CONTROLLED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

Copying phrases or sentences which have been mastered orally or which are written in the book is an extreme example of a controlled writing activity. Students do not usually enjoy these mechanical exercises, and we wonder how effective this activity is to develop writing skills because meaning is not taken into account at all. It seems clear that we can make this type of activities much more meaningful if we make students think and understand what they are writing.

GUIDED WRITING ACTIVITIES:

There are two basic ways of guiding the students' writing:

- By providing students with short reading texts or oral passages which serve as models for them to follow, as the product approach suggested.
- By doing some oral or written preparation for the writing beforehand with the whole class, as the process approach suggested.

FREE WRITING ACTIVITIES:

The traditional composition in which the teacher asks the students to write about their own experiences (e.g. after holidays), narrate stories (e.g. a funny anecdote), or describe pictures, is a good example of a free writing task. All the help students may have is a title or the first/lasts sentence of the composition. It is not an overstatement to say that even advanced students find these activities rather difficult and frustrating, since they tend to make a lot of mistakes. That is the reason why some oral or written preparation in class during the planning stage might help them to tackle the problem with a different attitude.

(Adapted from: Ozagac, O. (2004) 'Process Writing' (www) Bogazici University SFL. Available from: www.buowl.boun.edu.tr/teachers/)

SESSIONS 4-5. Teaching writing using process and product approaches Writing task sequences. Product Approach to Writing
Theoretical Guide

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A product approach is "a traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text, usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage". A product approach-oriented class is one where the teacher supplies the students with a standard text, mostly a model written by the native speaker and learners are encouraged to follow the model to construct their own piece of writing.

(Adapted from: Gabrielatos, C. (2002). EFL writing: product and process. Available from: http:// www.gabrielatos.com/Writing.pdf)

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The product approach focuses on the form. According to Nunan (1999: 154), "…product-based approaches see writing as mainly concerned with knowledge about the structure of language". It is also viewed to be focusing on the higher level of composition.

(Adapted from: Nunan, D. (1999). Second Language Teaching & Learning. Boston: Heinle&Heinle, 271.)

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White (1987: 265) defines the goal of product writing as, "… to go beyond sentence level manipulation to the production of paragraphs and subsequently of multi-paragraph compositions." The product approach can be comprehended as the approach of writing where the focus is on generating grammatically correct structures, imitating the native model of composition and the generation of higher order composition skills such as writing paragraphs. In other words, the approach does not pay much attention to the communication, audience or the composition skills.

(Adapted from: White, R.V. (1987). Approaches to Writing. In Long, M.H., and Richards, J.C. (eds.), Methodology in TESOL. A book of readings. New York: Newbury House)

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These four typical stages of product approach can be summarized as follows:

Familiarization: This is the first stage where the students are given a model composition and the grammar and lexical points are dealt with. The model composition is prepared with a focus on the grammar and lexical points the teacher wishes to teach the students in the class.

Controlled writing: In this stage, students are encouraged to practice the grammar and the vocabulary points and activities involving the substitution tables. These may be used to reinforce the points.

Guided writing: Here, students are allowed to write paragraphs and essays etc. using the grammar and the vocabulary points dealt with in the class. The teacher controls the form, the usage and the meaning. Students are still not independent writers.

Free writing: This is the fourth stage where students are encouraged to write on their own. In other words, students have the freedom to write. However, the form and the usage are the same as those that are dealt with in the class. Therefore, it cannot be affirmed that students have either learnt or mastered the skill so that they can write compositions on their own whenever required as students are still dependent on their teachers or the material given to them.

(Adapted from: Badger, R., & White, G. (2000). A process genre approach to teaching writing. ELT Journal 54 (2), 153-160.)

PROCESS APPROACH TO WRITING

Process approach to teaching writing is gaining popularity in second and foreign language instruction as it helps the novice writers to learn to write. The approach helps the learners to initiate writing and also builds up confidence. In other words, a process approach helps teachers to focus on the classroom activities that can be developed to help the learners start writing in the classroom itself. It serves as a helpline for the learners through which they can feel confident about writing, and master this complex skill by subjecting themselves to the various stages of writing. The number of stages in the process of writing varies from writer to writer. Generally speaking there have been two basic ways of teaching writing skills in second and foreign language courses: the product- focused approach and the process approach. Let us briefly examine the main principles and techniques of both approaches.

THE PRODUCT APPROACH

Principles:

– The teaching of second language writing has often been synonymous with the teaching of grammar or sentence structure.

– This view of writing reflects the principles of audiolingual theory which saw writing as the written form of spoken language.

– At more advanced levels, students will learn how to «write an essay on X».

– Correct sentence structure is an essential component of writing; grammatical skills receive considerable emphasis.

– Errors in writing are avoided by providing learners with models to follow.

– Students do not usually learn from their mistakes.

Techniques:

1) Providing models to which learners make minor changes and substitutions.

2) Expanding an outline or summary.

3) Constructing paragraphs from frames, tables, and other guides.

4) Producing a text through answering a set of questions.

5) Sentence combining: developing complex sentences following different rules of combination.

THE PROCESS APPROACH

Principles:

– This approach starts from an examination of what good writers actually do as they write.

– Writing activities should reflect a focus on the different stages in the writing process: planning, drafting and revising.

– New role of learners: they assume greater control over what they write, how they write it, and the evaluation of their own writing

– New role of teachers: they act as facilitators, organizing writing experiences that enable the learner to develop effective composing strategies.

– Students should produce complete (not isolated sentences), contextualised pieces of writing.

– Emphasis on why the writing is being done (a sense of purpose) and who it is being written for (a sense of audience).

– Students should spend classroom time on writing (not just a homework activity).

– Group composition: at each stage of the activity the group interaction contributes in useful ways to the writing process.

Techniques:

1) In the planning stage: brainstorming, free association, word mapping, ranking activities, quickwriting.

2) In the drafting stage: elaboration exercise, reduction exercise, jumbled paragraph, jumbled essay, writing thesis statements and topic sentences, group drafting, quickwriting.

3) In the revising stage: peer feedback, group correction activities, rewriting exercises, teacher feedback.

(Adapted from: Stanley, G. Approaches to process writing'. British Council Teaching English: Available from: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/write/process_write.shtml (July 15, 2006)

POINTS TO REMEMBER WHEN WRITING AN INVITATION LETTER

An invitation letter can be written in the format of a formal letter or an informal letter according to the relationship you have with the person or group of people you are writing to. Invitation letters will help the host have an account of the number of people who would be able to attend the event and the people whom the host should expect at the event so that they could make the necessary arrangements. When writing an invitation letter, be sure to mention the date on which the event will be held and the location where the event will take place. Most importantly, ensure that you send out the invitation letters well in advance so that the people who are invited can clear their schedules and make arrangements to come for the event.

Formal Invitation Letter

A formal invitation letter follows the general format of a formal letter. The letter should mention all the necessary details about the event in the letter. You have to keep it formal and professional when you write a formal invitation letter. Also, remember to keep it clear and precise.

Informal Invitation Letter

An informal invitation letter is written in the format of an informal letter. The letter should state the date and venue of the event. You can have a more positive and relaxed tone when writing an informal invitation letter. Make sure you proofread before you send it to the respective guests.

Invitation Letter Samples

Here are some sample invitation letters for your reference.

Invitation Letter for Event – Formal Invitation Letter for Graduation Ceremony

The Vice Principal
Karpagam College of Arts and Science
Sundarapuram
Coimbatore – 641054
07/01/2022

Dr. Shankar Devan
21/56, E C Layout
East Tambaram
Chennai – 600089
Subject: Formal Invitation to be the Chief Guest for the Graduation Ceremony
Dear Sir,

We are pleased to invite you to be the Chief Guest for the Graduation Ceremony that is to be held on the 24th of January, 2022 at Karpagam College of Arts and Science. We would be honoured to have you present our students with their degree certificates. It would be a great chance for the students also to interact with you about the different career opportunities they have.

We genuinely hope that you would accept our invitation. It would be highly appreciated if you could reply to us by the 13th of January, 2022, so that we can make the necessary arrangements for your travel and accommodation.

Looking forward to hearing from you.
Yours sincerely,
Signature
ILAMARAN VISWA
The Vice Principal
Informal Invitation Letter for a Wedding
22nd December, 2021
48/97, Golden Flats
Sathya Nagar 2nd Street
Mogappair West
Chennai – 600023
Dear Vinith,

This is to inform you that my son is getting married on the 10th of January, 2022, at NMR Conventional Centre, Bangalore. The wedding ceremony will begin at 7 a.m. The reception will be held on the same day from 12 p.m. onwards.

We wish and hope that you will be able to make it one or two days in advance. Kindly let us know as soon as possible when you will be reaching so that we could arrange transportation and accommodation facilities for you and your family.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.
Kind regards,
Signature
NAVEEN KUMAR

Invitation Mail for Parents' 25th Wedding Anniversary Celebration

Recipient's mail id: name.123@email.com

Subject: Invitation for 25th Wedding Anniversary

Dear Salvia,

We have decided to celebrate our parents' 25th wedding anniversary on the 15th of January, 2022. We have planned it for the weekend so that everyone would be able to make it. It is planned as a surprise, so it will be great if you and your family are able to make it.

The anniversary celebration will be held at our house. I am writing to you now because I need your help with the planning and arrangements. It would be really helpful if you could come home a few days earlier to help me with everything. Let me know when you will be able to come so I can plan accordingly.

Waiting for your response.

Regards,
Diana

Definition of a Formal Letter

Formal Letters, also called Business Letters or Professional Letters, are letters that are written in a strict and specific format. Formal letters are naturally much more formal in style than informal/friendly letters. Formal letters can be written for a number of reasons such as,

- o to express your concerns in the professional setup
- o to provide official information across your workspace
- o to order goods, to apply for employment
- o to the Editor of a newspaper addressing the problems faced by various groups of people in different areas, etc.

Structure of a Formal Letter

In order to be able to write a formal letter, you have to first understand the reason behind the letter. As far as formal letters are concerned, the structure of the letter changes depending on the type of letter. There are certain rules to be followed to be able to draft a formal letter. Every sentence should be well thought out and laid down in such a way that the message you want to convey should be precise and clear to the reader.

Types of Formal Letters

There are different types of formal letters, as discussed, and they can generally be labelled under the following terms:

- o Business Letters
- o Letters of Application
- o Letters to Newspapers

Business Letters

Business letters should be terse, clear and to the point. There is no room for any kind of stories in a business letter. Before you start to write a business letter, there are a few things you should keep in mind.

- o Use simple, everyday language to convey the message clearly instead of using flamboyant and overemphatic vocabulary.
- o Never use jargon that is commonly used in business when you write a business letter.
- o Avoid using abbreviations as much as possible.
- o The modes of address vary according to the type of letter and the receiver.
- o Clear and exact descriptions of the articles necessary with the expected quality and quantity should be listed with utmost care when you write a letter to order goods.
- o When replying to a business letter, always quote the date of the letter you are responding to and the number of references (if any).

Formal/Business letters include letters from an employer to the employees and vice versa, letters to order and replace goods, letters of serious concern to an officer of higher rank, letters of complaint, etc.

Letters of Application

Letters of Application usually consist of letters applying for employment. Before and after you write a letter of application, make sure you check for the following:

- o Always start with a short introduction stating whether the applicant is writing in response to a reference from an advertisement found online or in the newspaper.
- o State the age, education and experience of the applicant.
- o Provide the employer with a genuine expression of the applicant's earnestness in taking up the job in the respective company.

o Also, furnish references so that the employer can gather an idea of the kind of employee you would be.

Letters of Application should follow the format of formal/business letters.

Letters to Newspapers

Always address these letters to 'The Editor' and end with 'Yours faithfully'. Letters to the Editor are letters that express concerns that should be addressed to the higher authorities. These letters should be professional and authentic. No newspaper would publish anonymous letters, so make sure you are writing the letter for a cause and provide your name and address correctly.

Writing a Formal Letter – Parts of a Formal Letter

When writing a formal letter, always be respectful and conscious of your language, no matter what the subject of the letter might be. To write a formal letter, there are some points to be remembered.

1) Always start with the **sender's address**

2) This is followed by the **date**.

3) The **receiver's address** comes next. The receiver can be the name of the firm or the one who represents the firm.

4) The **subject of the letter** is very important. It is a statement of the purpose of the letter. It should be written in a single line.

5) The **salutation** can be *Dear Sir/Ma'am*. If it is a person you know well, you can address them by their name, '*Dear Shrinath*'.

6) The **body of the letter** can be written in 3 paragraphs.
   o The first paragraph should be aimed at introducing yourself and stating the purpose of your letter.
   o The second paragraph should furnish all the information about the matter.
   o The third paragraph can be a concluding paragraph where you lay out your expectations regarding the matter.

7) To **close the letter**, you can use a complimentary closing like '*Yours faithfully*', '*Yours sincerely'* etc.

8) Unlike informal letters, the **signature** should include your name (in block letters) and designation below your signature.

Formal Letter Writing Samples

Formal Letter Sample 1 – Letter to the publisher ordering books for your store

Javed
Read More Book Store
24, Crosby Lane
Bangalore 600045
20th August 2019

The Manager
Zack Publishing House
Mumbai 400012
Subject: Requirement of new books for the store – reg.
Dear Sir,

I have received the books that you had sent last week. The books are in perfect condition, and they were delivered on time. Owing to the great service rendered, I would like to order more books that would be a great addition to the wide range of books available at my store. Given below is a list of books that I would like to purchase:

Title of the Book	Author	No. of Copies
Wuthering Heights	Emily Bronte	3
Treasure Island	R. L. Stevenson	2
A Brief History of Time	Stephen Hawking	3
Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!	Richard Feynman	2

I shall be grateful if you could send me copies of these books as mentioned by VPP as early as possible to the address given.

Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Signature

JAVED

Manager – Read More Book Store

Formal Letter Sample 2 – Letter to the Editor about a road that needs repair

Ganesh
25, SS Street
Chernan Nagar
Coimbatore 641023
8th September 2019

The Editor
The Hindu
Coimbatore
Subject: Repair of the road in Cheran Nagar
Sir,

I would like to bring to your notice that the people in and around Cheran Nagar have been facing difficulties in travelling back and forth because of the bad condition of the roads there. We have appealed to the Municipality, but there has not been any development on the issue so far.

As private appeals to their office have had no effect, perhaps a little publicity will do no harm. For the last month, the roads in Cheran Nagar have been almost impassable. The surface is badly broken up by the heavy rains, and on a dark night it is positively dangerous for motors or carriages to pass that way. Moreover, there are heaps of road metal on both sides of the road, which leave very little room in the middle. The residents of the area have been inconvenienced in this way for weeks.

The situation is becoming worse. There have been multiple accidents happening due to this condition. I request you to highlight the seriousness of the matter in your newspaper so that the road may be put in thorough repair without further delay.

Thanking You
Yours sincerely,
Signature
GANESH
Resident

What is an Informal Letter?

Informal letters are personal letters that are written to let your friends or family know about what is going on in your life and to convey your regards. An informal letter is usually written to a family member, a close acquaintance or a friend. The language used in an informal letter is casual and personal.

How can you write about in an Informal Letter?

You can literally write about anything you feel or think you want to convey. Informal letters can be written to inform your dear one about your success in a competition, about a movie you watched recently, about the trip that you would be going on, etc. It can also be to enquire about their well-being, to invite them to go along with you on a trip, to congratulate them on their new job, to convey your regards, etc. You can be as personal as you want when writing an informal letter.

How to write an Informal Letter?

Like any letter, there is a format to write an informal letter in English. Unlike a formal letter, an informal letter does not need to state something specific. It can be written in an easy, conversational style. They are in the nature of a friendly chat, so it can include a variety of topics. It can have all that you want to tell your dear one about. You can use colloquial expressions, unlike formal letters. There are a few easy guidelines that you can follow to be able to write impressive informal letters.

Address and Date:

If you are thinking about how to start writing an informal letter, here is what you should know. To get your informal letter format right, you have to begin it with the sender's address. The address is written on the left-hand side of the paper. It is necessary that you write the complete address so that the receiver can write back to you. So, see to that you give the correct address along with the pin code. In case you are writing to someone in a different country, make sure you include your country in the address. For example,

29, NBC Garden
Coimbatore – 641053

This is followed by the date. Writing the date is important as it would help the receiver know when exactly you had written the letter. You can write the date in either of the following formats:

For example,
15/11/2021 or 15th November 2021 or November 15, 2021

Forms of Greeting/Salutation:

In informal letters to friends and family, you can address them by their names prefixed by qualifying terms such as *Dear, My dear, Dearest*, etc. You can also address them by their pet names (Eg: Dearest Rosy, Dear Andy, My dear Sweety…) or by their relationship with you (Dear Uncle, Dearest Grandma, My dear

Cousin…). If you are writing to an ordinary friend who is older than you are, or of superior rank, it is respectful to use prefixes such as *Mr, Mrs, Ms*, etc. For example, Dear Mr Reddy.

Introduction and Body of the Letter:

The words you use determine the nature of your letter. You can start your informal letter with an introduction to set the tone of the matter that is going to be discussed. You can begin by enquiring about the health and well-being of the recipient. For instance, *I hope this letter of mine finds you in the pinkest of health*. You can then explain the reason behind the letter and provide the details as elaborate as you wish to, unlike formal letters. The letter can be more like a friendly chat than an essay. You can write in a very casual and personal tone. If you are writing to an older person, do not use disrespectful terms or sentences.

Conclusion:

End the informal letter on a friendly note. Use words in such a way that the recipient feels like they have had a wonderful time chatting with you. See to that you make sure you let them know that you would be awaiting their response to your letter.

Forms of Subscription/Signature:

You can use the following in informal letters to relatives and near friends.*Yours affectionately, Yours lovingly, Your loving friend, With love*, etc., followed by your name (mostly your first name).

If you are writing to a close acquaintance whom you have addressed as *Dear Mr, Mrs*, etc., you can use *Yours sincerely, Kind regards*, etc.

<u>Informal Letter Format Samples</u>

Let us now look at some examples of informal letter formats to help you understand better.

Informal Letter Format 1 – Letter to your cousin enquiring about her first visit to Ethiopia

34, Park Avenue
Mumbai – 400023
24th September 2021
Dearest Maria,

I was so glad to hear from my mother that you are back home after the trip. Hope you had a safe and enjoyable trip. I have been waiting to hear all about the trip from you.Since this was the first time you have been to a foreign land, I guess every little bit of the trip was as exciting as you expected it to be. I have heard from my friends residing there that the place is extremely beautiful and that the people there are very endearing. However, I was worried when I knew that there were a few bomb blasts during your stay there. Hope all of you there were safe. I hope everything else was fine except for this.

I had spoken to your mother earlier, and she told me that you would be coming home after two weeks. I saw your pictures on Instagram as well. I can't wait to meet you and hear all your stories. Waiting eagerly for your reply.

Your loving cousin,
Sarah

Informal Letter Format 2 – Letter to a friend about arranging a get-together

BB Street,
Allahabad – 211005
12/02/2020
Dear Surya,

Hope you are keeping well, and everyone at home is keeping safe and healthy. It has been a long time since all of us have met, so I was thinking we could all meet up. I have planned to have a get-together next month. I would love to discuss more about it.

All of us could meet on Friday evening and stay over the weekend at a resort in Munnar. The climate in Munnar is great and it will be a good stress reliever. We could also go around the tourist spots if everyone is interested. If you are ready, we could talk to the others also. I will visit you next weekend to discuss more on this.

Awaiting your reply and hoping to meet you soon.
Love,
Sreya

Informal Letter Format 3 – Reply, regretting inability to join

144, Stark Lane
Mumbai – 400054
15/02/2020
Dear Sreya,

It is extremely thoughtful of you to plan a get-together for all of us. I wish I could join you, but I am sorry to say that I have a project starting next month and it would not be possible for me to be there. If there is any way of preponing the get-together to any time before the month-end, I can definitely make it happen.

I hope we can reschedule the get-together and not miss the chance to meet up. Waiting to hear from you.

With love,
Surya

Basic formal email structure

Before we get into different email templates, it's important to know how to build an email yourself. For the most part, every email, regardless of its contents, will follow the same structure with the same basic elements. You should get to know these elements in order to ensure proper and effective email writing as a whole.

The basic elements of professional email writing:
1) Your email address
2) Subject line
3) Email opening
4) Email body
5) Email ending
6) Email Sign off
7) Email signature/footer

Now let's break these down, one by one.

Email address

Your email address is oftentimes out of your control. If you're working for a company or operate under the umbrella of a brand your email address will likely include the company or brand name domain.

For example, the emails in WiseStamp are all in the following format: [employee_name]@wisestamp.com. This ensures that we all have a professional business email address. Since only the owner of wisestamp.com can issue email addresses under that domain name, this ensures our emails appear legitimate.

Imagine if each employee would have a random Gmail address like [name]wisestamp@gmail.com, which anyone can create, that would be a bit suspicious. Email open rates are first and foremost dependant on trust, so make sure you have a trustworthy email address or suffer very low open rates.

Subject lines

Your subject line will be the single most important element in your formal email writing. It is the first thing your recipient will see and unless you convince her then and there that your email is safe, relevant, and high priority (in that order) it may never be opened. If this happens, any effort you put into the rest of the email elements will go to waste.Your subject line will depend on the purpose or content of your email, but overall, you want it to be something engaging enough for a recipient to click on.

Email subject line guidelines:

o Be clear and specific – avoid using generic or clickbait subject lines that say nothing or make unrealistic promises, like "find out how to double your business in a week".

o Be original – avoid using those all too common subject line templates you find on the internet. Instead make original subject lines that are relevant, personal, and concise.

o Add relevancy – address something that the recipient will recognize, like an acquaintance name or a an article/ show/ book they appeared on.

Tips for writing great reviews

Writing great reviews will increase the likelihood that your review will get published, and helps others discover the places that are just right for them. Here are a few tips:

o Be informative and insightful: Be specific and relevant to the place you're reviewing, and describe what other visitors are likely to experience. Highlight what makes the place special, and try to share something unique and new.

o Be authentic: Review your own experience, and explain what the place was like and the service you received. Try to be as accurate as possible, and include both the positive and negative aspects of your visit.

o Be respectful: Business owners often use feedback to improve their offerings. Even if you're frustrated, make sure your criticism is constructive. Additionally, please avoid profanity.

o Write with style: Check your spelling and grammar, and avoid excessive capitalization and punctuation. In general, a paragraph is a great length for a review.

o Avoid personal and professional information: Do not include the phone numbers or URLs of other businesses in your reviews. Additionally, do not write reviews for places where you are currently or formerly, an employee.

o Avoid general commentary: Certain locations may become the subject of larger public debate or conversation due to recent news coverage or current events. While we respect and value your opinion, Local Reviews are not meant for social or political commentary. Forums, like

blogs or social networks, are much more appropriate for those types of conversations. Please write about your firsthand experience with the place and not general commentary on the place in relation to recent news.Review essays should be 8-10 typed double-spaced pages. They should contain the following elements:

- Title Course Number Instructor's Name Your Name The titles of the readings under review. Part 1 (about 1-2 pages)
- state a question you wish to answer or a theme you wish to address using the readings
- state your answer to the question or conclusion about the theme
- give a road-map for how you are going to make that argument Part 2 (about 6 pages)
- introduce the question or theme you wish to address -- why is it important?
- engage in a sustained review of the readings, comparing and contrasting them, as a means to addressing your chosen question or theme
- make the argument for a particular answer or conclusion Part 3 (about 2 pages)
- respond to likely criticisms of your answer or conclusion
- what are the policy implications of your view?
- what further research questions are important to answer?

(Adapted from: Hedge, T. (2005) Writing. English teaching methodology, Resource Books for Teachers. Oxford University Press, 2nd edition.)

Elements of a report

Title page
This page should include:
- the report title, which states the report's purpose
- your name and the name of the person receiving the report (place in the bottom right-hand corner)
- the submission date.

Executive summary
An executive summary is a paragraph that provides the reader with a quick overview of the entire report, including its purpose, context, methods, major findings, conclusions and recommendations. It is often easier to write the executive summary once the report has been completed.This is placed on a separate page between the title page and the table of contents. This may often be the only part of the report that is actually read.

Table of contents
The table of contents lists the main sections (headings) of the report, and the page on which each begins. If your report includes tables, diagrams or illustrations, these are listed separately on the page after the table of contents.

Introduction
The introduction should:
- discuss the importance or significance of the research or problem to be reported
- define the purpose of the report
- outline the issues to be discussed (scope)
- inform the reader of any limitations to the report, or any assumptions made.

Discussion or body
This contains the main substance of the report, organised into sections with headings and subheadings rather than paragraphs. The body of a report can include the following:
- A description of the issue or situation which is being reported on. This may include a literature review of the research on that issue.
- The method of data collection, if applicable - this should include what you did and why, such as a survey or interview, and the size and selection criteria of the study sample.
- A discussion and analysis of the data collected - this should comment on the reliability and accuracy of the data and relate the findings to your report's purpose and current literature.

Conclusion
This summarises the key findings from the discussion section and may be numbered here for clarity. Relate your conclusion to the objectives of the report and arrange your points logically so that major conclusions are presented first. Some reports may require a discussion of recommendations, rather than a conclusion.

Recommendations
These are subjective opinions about what action you think could be followed. They must be realistic, achievable and clearly relate to the conclusion of the report.

Reference list

This must contain all the material cited in the report. It must be accurate and consistent with a standard referencing style.

Appendices

These contain extra supporting information that is put at the end of the report so as not to distract the reader from the main issues. They contain detailed information, such as questionnaires, tables, graphs and diagrams. Appendices should be clearly set out and numbered in the order they are mentioned in the text.

(Adapted from: Evans, V. (1998) Successful Writing Proficiency. Express Publishing. Available from: Budden, Jo. Writing activities [online].
www.teachingenglish.org.uk/activities/writing-activities.)

Theoretical Guide

ASSESSING WRITING: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

Why is it so difficult to assess writing? Unlike a math problem that has a clear answer or a science concept that is backed up by provable facts, writing can be challenging to grade because it is …

- o *Creative*. Whether the writing assignment is narrative or expository, each writer combines words in unique and creative ways to express their thoughts.
- o *Subjective*. There are grammar rules to inform accurate writing, but two grammatically correct papers on the same topic can be drastically different.
- o *Personal*. Writing is a form of personal expression, which can make it intimidating to both share and assess.

Despite these challenges, teachers and students have relatively similar concerns when it comes to grading writing. Does the grade reflect student achievement in an accurate and unbiased way? Is the feedback specific enough to explain the grade and guide future skill work and help set goals? In order to address these concerns, it is important for educators to keep in mind that writing is a complex task that is complicated further by specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia. Completing a writing assignment requires comprehension of both the subject matter and the prompt, as well as the organization skills that help students plan their ideas before writing. Writers must also consider the required text structure, think critically, and establish a clear voice that is appropriate for the audience. These are just a few of the hidden demands that must be addressed as students learn and practice a specified process to become stronger writers. Meaningful assessment is crucial to help students understand their strengths and weaknesses as writers in order to see progress and achieve success.There are three different types of assessments that must be employed to inform writing instruction and help students set personal writing goals.

(Adapted from: Weigle, Sara Cushing. (2002). Assessing Writing. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 4.)

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Diagnostic Assessments demonstrate the knowledge and/or skills that a student possesses *before* formal instruction begins for a specified time period or content unit. The benefits of diagnostic assessments are that they …

- Provide an honest picture of student ability and/or knowledge.
- Are ungraded, which can lessen student anxiety.
- Inform effective instruction.
- Help create relevant learning goals.
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Formative Assessment refers to the ongoing process of evaluating the knowledge and/or skills that a student possesses *during* a specified time period or content unit. The benefits of formative assessments are that they …

- Provide a useful progress / comprehension gauge.
- Can be used with the whole class or small group, as well as individualized for specific students.
- Inform lesson planning.
- Are ungraded, lessening the pressure on the student.
- Can be implemented continuously.
- Allow students to be more metacognitive.
- Can be helpful in timing summative assessments

Summative Assessments evaluate student learning and/or skill acquisition *at the conclusion* of a specified time period or content unit. The benefits of summative assessments are that they …

- Determine whether students have met learning goals
- Demonstrate student ability and achievement
- However, to be accurate, summative assessments need to be …
- Fair and unbiased.
- Varied in format, allowing some student choice, if possible.
- Reflective of instructional methods, allowing students to demonstrate their mastery of specific writing skills.
- Appropriately leveled for student ability.

As demonstrated in the graphic to the left, all three of these assessments must be employed to help students achieve their writing goals. Diagnostic assessments help to determine student goals, formative

assessments evaluate student progress throughout the course of instruction, and summative assessments determine skill mastery. Using all three methods of assessment, remembering to involve students in conversations about their writing, can help both the teacher and student to feel confident in the validity of writing assessment.

(Adapted from: Stanley, Graham (2003) Approaches to process writing [online]. Available from: www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/approaches-process-writing.

Budden, Jo. Writing activities [online]. Available from: www.teachingenglish.org.uk/activities/writing-activities.)

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You can also create your own writing correction code you usually use in students' works.

- Mark selectively. When we find a lot of mistakes in a composition, it is a good idea - specially when we carry out informal assessment - to focus our attention on some particular aspects, such as basic grammatical mistakes or organization, and ignore the rest, otherwise students will see their page painted in red and feel discouraged. We can leave the other mistakes for another time.

- Use a clear correction code. In order to give feedback to students, teachers could create a system of abbreviations which they write in the margins of the composition to indicate the type of error detected, so that students can try to identify and correct them themselves later on in class. Some correction symbols could be the following:

Sp = spelling mistake
T = wrong tense
Wo = word order
Pr = prepositions
L = linking
V = vocabulary (inappropriate language)
P = punctuation
0 = a word missing
? = unclear meaning
Pa = paragraphs

Mistake One: Spelling

The most common mistake that students make is associated with spelling in English. It includes ambiguous rules and the alphabet does not follow particular phonemic rules. Students may attempt to spell words using a phonemic logic, particularly if learners whose first language has phonemic script: Korean, Arabic, etc. What is recommended is that the teacher highlights spelling errors and in the margin of the text, write the code "S". Students will then have to work out the correct spelling of the word that they attempted.

Mistake Two: Word Order

The second most common mistake that occurs with student writing is related to word order. I usually write out "WO" in the margin of a text and then highlight the word that is in the incorrect place. This will again encourage learners to review where they have placed the word and the best location.

Mistake Three: Wrong Word

The next mistake that can occur in a learner's piece of writing is the use of a wrong word. This is usually a common error when a student's L1 uses different verb and noun collocations but applies the same rule to their L2: "ride skis", "ride a plane", etc. I usually highlight the word and use the term 'WW' for wrong word within the margin of the text.

Mistake Four: Tense

The fourth error related to student writing is the use of tenses in a text. It is common for students whose first language that follows a style where the verb remains in the present yet uses time markers to indicate the text, and for learners to replicate this within their English writing. It can be quite a common error and it is necessary to highlight this early on, so that the student becomes more aware to reduce this from happening. I use the term 'T' to highlight this issue for students in the hope that they can ensure that the verb is used correctly in English.

Mistake Five: Subject / Verb Agreement

This next mistake is associated with the correct use of the 'be' verb and ensuring that it agrees with the subject. The most common error that occurs is a misunderstanding of uncountable nouns with the auxiliary verb. The way I highlight this error is using the code 'C' for concordance (as in formal agreement), and then get students to review their auxiliary verbs in their piece of text.

Mistake Six: Wrong Form

The sixth mistake that teachers may encounter with their student writing is the incorrect form of possessives: 'ours', 'yours', 'his', etc. I usually highlight this error by using the code 'WF' in the margin.

Mistake Seven: Missing Word

With the seventh error, students may miss words when writing. It is important to highlight this error to raise learner awareness of the issues that they may have when writing. You can either write 'MW' in the margin or use the arrow to highlight the mistake, or a combination of both. Rather than telling the student the word that they have missed, it would be more appropriate to get students to consider the word that they need to insert into the gap.

Mistake Eight: Unnecessary Word

This following mistake that teachers may encounter with a student's piece of writing is using unnecessary words. This is commonly associated with repetitive words (using the same word two or more times in a sentence) or more than one adverb (or an incorrect adverb) within a sentence. I usually highlight this issues by putting brackets around the unnecessary word, but you can use the code 'UW' in the margin if you wish.

Mistake Nine: Unclear Meaning

Sometimes, the teacher may come across a piece of writing where the meaning is unclear. It is usually best to highlight by including a question mark above or beside the sentence and, if possible, highlighting the area where the meaning is unclear. If I encounter this error, I tend to speak to the student and ask what they are trying to express and it usually helps the student to rephrase the sentence as this tutorial. However, you could give a student space to rewrite.

Mistake Ten: Punctuation

The final mistake that students may make with their writing is associated with punctuation: full-stops, commas, question marks, etc. Whenever I notice this error, I highlight this by using the term 'P' within the margin and highlighting the parts of a text where the punctuation needs improvemen. Those are the ten errors that may occur during the writing process for students and it is important to incorporate some form of learner training. I find it valuable to share with students an example of the codes within the written feedback and some examples, so students are better prepared to review their writing while responding to feedback. You may face students who expect the teacher to correct everything, but it is important not to make the switch too quickly otherwise you may have students who are unwilling. As with any change, it is important to make changes slowly so students become accustomed to this form of feedback, especially as it is more learner-centred.

(Adapted from: Donald, Rolf (2003) Error Correction 1 [online]. Available from: www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/error-correction-1.)

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If what we want to do is to assess the students' writing skills formally, that is to say, to include some writing activities in a test, we should think of the writing activities we have been doing in class and choose the right ones. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find the ideal test format for writing; each one has some advantages and disadvantages. Some might be easy to mark, but very difficult to set. Others might be more realistic and communicative, but only good for higher levels.

WHY TO INTEGRATE THE LANGUAGE SKILLS

a) When we communicate, we often use more than a single language skill. On the telephone, for instance, we listen and speak-maybe we also write down a message and read over what we have written.

b) Integrated approach helps to build new knowledge and skills on to what students already know and can do. So, if students are able to read a short story, this skill will help them to write their own story.

c) Also, integrating the skills allows you to build in more variety into the lesson because the range of activities will be wider. Instead of just having listening, the students can have speaking, reading and writing practice. This can raise their motivation to learn English.

d) Above all, integrating the skills means that you are working at the level of realistic communication, which provides all-round development of communicative competence in English.

How to integrate the four skills

1) The easiest form of integration is within the same medium (either oral or written), from receptive to productive skills.

	Receptive Skill	Productive Skill
Oral Medium	listening	speaking
Written Medium	reading	writing

2) The second kind is complex integration. This involves constructing a series of activities that use a variety of skills. However, it's important to make sure that one activity is closely linked thematically to the next one.

The implications of integrating the four skills for teaching

Integration of the four skills is concerned with realistic communication. This means that we are teaching at the discourse level, not just at the level of sentences or individual words and phrases. Discourse is a whole unit of communicative text, either spoken or written.

However, integrating the four language skills can be demanding of the teacher.

a) We need to have a good understanding of discourse, and to be able to use textbooks flexibly.

b) This can also be time-consuming, requiring a lot of preparation.

c) Another limitation is the problem of designing suitable materials that take account of students' different skill levels. The four skills tend to develop at a different pace: receptive skills are stronger than productive skills, for example.

This means that teachers have to be skilful is selecting or designing integrated activities for their students.

(Adapted from: Kroll, B. (2001). Considerations for teaching ESL/EFL writing course. In M. Celce-Murcia (ed.), Teaching English as a second/foreign language (3rd ed., pp. 219-232). Boston: Heinle&Heinle)

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1. Why Integration?

- A proficient teacher who professes to follow principles of CLT would never conduct, say, a "Reading" class without extensive use of speaking, listening, and writing in the class.

- The integration of the four skills is the only plausible approach to take within a communicative, interactive framework.

-Most of the interactive techniques involve the integration of skills.

2. Integrated skills

1) It is the teaching of the language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in conjunction with each other.

2) If we look around us in our daily lives we can see that we rarely use language skills in isolation but in conjunction. And it is our job to make the classroom activities as similar as the ones in the real life situation. Provide the learners chances to use the language skills integratively.

3) Even though the classroom is clearly not the same as 'real' life, we can argue that part of its function is to replicate it.

4) By giving learners tasks which expose them to these skills in conjunction, it is possible that they will gain a deeper understanding of how communication works in the foreign language

5) Learners become more motivated when they see the value of performing meaningful tasks and activities in the classroom.

3. The following observations support such techniques:

1) Production and reception are quite simply two sides of the same coin; one cannot split the coin in two.

2) Interaction means sending and receiving messages.

3) Written and spoken language often (but not always!) bear a relationship to each other; to ignore that relationship is to ignore the richness of language.

4) For literate learners, the interrelationship of written and spoken language is an intrinsically motivating reflection of language and culture and society.

5) By attending primarily to what learners can do with language, and only secondary to the forms of language, we invite any or all of the four skills that are relevant into the classroom arena.

6) Often one skill will reinforce another; we learn to speak, for example. in part by modeling what we hear, and we learn to write by examining what we can read.

4. Models for Integrated Skills

* How can you maintain an integrated-skills focus in your teaching?

- The following five models are in common use. They all pull the direct attention of the student away from the separateness of the skills of language and toward the meaningful purposes for which we use language.

1) Content-based Teaching

(1) It integrates the learning of some specific subject-matter content with the learning of a second language.

(2) The overall structure of a content-based curriculum, in contrast to many traditional curricula, is dictated more by the nature of the subject matter than

by language forms and sequences.

(3) The second language is simply the medium to convey informational content of interest and relevance to the learner.

(4) Can content-based teaching take place at all levels of proficiency, even beginning levels? While it is possible to argue that certain basic survival skills, for example, are themselves content-based skills and that a beginning level class could therefore be content-based, such an argument seems to extend the content-based notion beyond its normal bounds.

(5) Content-based instruction usually pertains to academic or occupational instruction over an extended period of time at intermediate to advanced proficiency levels.

(6) Content-based teaching presents some challenges to language teachers. Allowing the subject matter to control the selection and sequencing of language items means that you have to view your teaching from an entirely different perspective.

(7) You are first and foremost teaching geography or math or culture; secondarily you are teaching language. So you may have to become a double expert!

(8) There are some team-teaching models of content-based teaching, however, that alleviate this potential drawback. In some schools, for example, a subject matter teacher and a language teacher link their courses and curriculum so that each complements the other.

2) Theme-based Teaching

(1) A weak form of content-based teaching actually places an equal value on content and language objectives.

(2) While the curriculum, to be sure, is organized around subject-matter area,both students and teachers are fully aware that language skills do not occupy a subordinate role.

(3) This weak version is actually very practical and very effective in many instructional settings. It typically manifests itself in what has come to be called theme-based, or topic-based teaching.

3) Experiential Learning

- It highlights giving students concrete experiences through which they "discover" language principles (even if subconsciously) by trial and error, by processing feedback, by building hypotheses about language, and revising these assumptions in order to become fluent. That is, teachers do not simply tell students about how language works; instead, they give students opportunities to use language as they grapple with the problem-solving complexities of a variety of concrete experiences.

(Adapted from: Tangpermpoon, T. (2008). Integrated Approaches to Improve Students Writing Skills for English Major Students. ABAC Journal , 28 (2), 7.)

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The Episode Hypothesis

1) Over a hundred years ago, François Gouin, designed a method of language teaching called the Series Method. One of the keys to the success of the method lay in the presentation of language in an easily followed story line.

2) In some ways, Gouin was utilizing a psychological device that, a hundreds years later, John Oller called the episode hypothesis. According to Oller, "text (i.e., discourse in any form) will be easier to reproduce, understand, and recall, to the extent that is structured episodically." By this he meant that the presentation of language is enhanced if students do not have disconnected series of sentences thrown at them, but rather sentences that are interconnected in an interest-provoking episode.

3) How the Episode Hypothesis contributes or relates to integrated-skills teaching:

① Stories or episodes challenge the teacher and textbook writers to present interesting, natural language to the student, whether the language is viewed as written discourse or oral discourse.

② Episodes can be presented in either written and/or spoken form, thus requiring reading and/or writing skills on the student's part.

③ Episodes can provide the stimulus for spoken or written questions that students respond to, in turn, by speaking or writing.

④ Students can be encouraged to write their own episodes, or to complete an episode whose resolution or climax is not presented.

⑤ Those written episodes might then be dramatized in the classroom by the students.

Task-based Teaching

(1) Five characteristics of a task-based approach to language teaching: (Nunan, 1991: 279)

① An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.

② The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.

③ The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only on language, but also on the learning process itself.

④ An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.

⑤ An attempt to link classroom learning with language activation outside the classroom.

(2) In task-based instruction, the priority is not the bits and pieces of language but rather the functional purposes for which language must be used.

(3) While content-based instruction focuses on subject-matter content, task-based instruction focuses on a whole set of real-world tasks themselves.

(4) Input for tasks can come from a variety of authentic sources.

(5) Task-based curricula differ from content-based, theme-based and experiential instruction in that the course objectives are somewhat more unabashedly language-based.

(6) While there is an ultimate focus on communication and purpose and meaning, nevertheless goals are linguistic in nature. They are not linguistic in the traditional sense of just focusing on grammar or phonology, but by maintaining the centrality of functions like greeting people, expressing opinions, requesting information, etc., the course goals center on learners' pragmatic language competence.

(7) So we have in task-based teaching a well integrated approach to language teaching that asks you to organize your classroom around those practical tasks that language users engage in "out there" in the real world. These tasks virtually always imply several skill areas, not just one, and so by pointing toward tasks, we disengage ourselves from thinking only in terms of the separate four skills. Instead, principles of listening, speaking, reading, and writing become appropriately subsumed under rubric of what it is our learners are going to do with this language.

(Adapted from: Harmer, J. (2007) The Practice of English Language Teaching. Longman.)

Conclusion

a. Integrating the four language skills enhances the focus on realistic communication, which is essential in developing students' competence in English.

b. Two ways of integrating skills: *simple integration*, whereby a receptive language skill serves as a model for a productive language skill, and *complex integration*, which is a combination of activities involving different skills, linked thematically.

c. Integrated language learning can be more motivating, because the students are using the language for a real purpose, instead of, say, just practising the grammar.

Integration requires skilful teaching, but it can bring worthwhile results.

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