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APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES TO TEACHING WRITING

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Althought this paper does not start with "once upon a time" it does have a happy ending. And indeed I will live happily ever after now that this work is done. I want to thank all the people who have been part of this process.

To my Lord: thank you God for giving me the opportunity to be here to end this.

To my Mom and Dad: thank you so much for your support, you have always been there despite everything, you have given me so much that I would never be able to pay you back, Mom, you have taught me to not to give up, to fight no matter what, and that everything is possible if you put your mind into it. Dad, thank you for telling me 'no' to some of my requests, thanks to that, I have learned to fight to get a 'yes' as an asnwer, thank you very much for your support.

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INTRODUCTION

We understand each other through social interaction by talking. But nobody writes as he or she speaks; few people know how to express their ideas by writing. Students feel less responsibility when they talk than when they write. Whenever a student sees a sheet of paper and his/her teacher asks him/her to write about a given topic, they find it difficult to do it either in their mother tongue or in English.

Very often students make mistakes when they face a written task. First they think that if they just write, it will be all right, and they do not care about the rules and the process that a written task involves. Second some students think that they do not have something good to write about or they just think that their work is not worth doing it.

Davies and Pearse (2002) state that writing is probably the linguistic skill that is least used by most people in their native language. Even in the most advanced socities a significant percentage of the adult population writes with difficulty. Good writing skills usually develop from extensive reading, some specific training, and a good deal of practice.

The purpose of this research is to provide teachers with an overview of the writing apporaches, however this paper will be oriented to the three main writing approaches, process, prouct and genre. So, this paper is organized in three chapters. Chapter one provides definitions from different authors of what writing is; issues related to writing difficulties in the classroom are also presented and an overview of the reason why people should write and why writing should be taught, and principles to do so. In addition to that this chapter also presents an overview of characteristics, types, and

skills involved in written language. Chapter two discusses different approaches and strategies to teaching writing. Finally in chapter three the conclusions of this research are presented.

CHAPTER 1. THE NATURE OF WRITING

1.1 An overview of writing

Ghaith (2002) states that writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete. Writing encourages thinking and learning for it motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection. When thought is written down, ideas can be examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed.

Ghaith (2002) also considers that writing is most likely to encourage thinking and learning when students view writing as a process. By recognizing that writing is a recursive process, and that every writer uses the process in a different way, students experience less pressure to get it right the first time and are more willing to experiment, explore, revise, and edit. Yet, novice writers need to practice writing or exercises that involve copying or reproduction of learned material in order to learn the conventions of spelling, punctuation, grammatical agreement, and the like. Furthermore, students need to write in the language through engaging in a variety of grammar practice activities of controlled nature. Finally, they need to begin to write within a framework flexibility measures that include; transformation exercises, sentence combining, expansion, embellishments, idea frames, and similar activities).

1.2 What is writing?

In order to understand best the importance of teaching students how to write, it is first important to provide a definition of what writing is.

For as long as languages have been taught, teachers have asked students to write things in their notebooks and exercise books. Yet sometimes, over the years, it has seemed that writing has been seen as only a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary, rather than as a skill in its own.

Recently, however, trainers and methodologists have looked again at writing in the foreign-language classroom and put forward ways of teaching this skill which acknowledge and emphasize its importance (Harmer, 2004) .

Hedge (2000) defines "writing as the result of employing strategies to manage the composing process, which is one gradually developing a text" (p. 302). She also argues that writing involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, select appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. "It is a complex process which is neither easy not spontaneous for many second language writers" (ibid).

Chakraverty and Gautam (2000) point out that writing is an important part of language learning, and that is essentially a reflective activity that requires enough time to think about the specific topic and to analyze and classify any background knowledge. Then, writers need suitable language to structure these ideas in the form of a coherent discourse.

According to Davies and Pearse (2002) writing is probably the linguistic skill that is least used by most people in their native language. Even in the most advanced societies a significant percentage of the adult population writes with difficulty. Good writing skills usually develop from extensive reading, some specific training, and a good deal of practice. For these reasons, students need an understanding of how

words, sentences, and larger discourse structures can shape and express the meanings they want to convey.

According to Davies and Pearse (2002) there are basic skills involved in writing: handwriting or typing, spelling, constructing grammatical sentences and punctuating. These basic skills should be taught by teachers, and practiced by students so that their written tasks become a very undestandable reading.

1.3 Why to write?

Very often students do not understand why teachers have to assign essays, or research papers as homework, they do not even know why they have to write in the first place. Evans (1982) states that if most written English is a complex and potentially arduous activity and "The motives for writing are more abstract, more intellectualized, further removed from immediate needs" (p.89), why insist on demanding endless pages which require many teacher-hours of marking. That is why it is necessary to design tasks that are authentic and require students to write about real topics.

Writing is one aspect of literacy, and a literate society requires that its people should communicate effectively in writing. The written word is an instrument for representing, recording and exploring experience, opinions, ideas and facts. It provides opportunities for sustained thinking and reflection. More specifically, in the school context it is a means of recording completed work for future reference and a means of testing. The actual process of writing can be an aid to memory; it can clarify difficult ideas and provide a means of discovery as the writer stumbles upon ideas that were barely recognized and only crystallized on paper.

When questioned about this issue teachers in general tend to stress the importance of writing as a means of recording, recalling and testing. The teacher of English typically emphasizes the importance of writing as a means of self-expression and self-discovery.

Many teachers find a lesson without writing at best disconcerting and at worst a denial of the definition of "teaching". Writing for many, perhaps particularly the English teacher, is a means of validation and it is too temptingly easy to slot into the pattern of teacher's subject/class-written exercise/teacher assessment. We as teachers, must have very good reasons for asking our pupils to write and for asking them to produce the types of writing they do.

1.4 Micro- and macro skills for writing

According to Brown (2007) these are the micro- and macroskills involved in writing.

MICROSKILLS

1.- Produce graphemes and orthographic patters of English

2.- Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.

3.- Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order pattersn.

4.- Use acceptable grammatical systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization) patterns, and rules.

5.- Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.

MACROSKILLS

1.- Use cohesive devices in written discourse.

2.- Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse.

3.- Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose.

4.- Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relatins as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.

5.- Distinguish between literal and implied meaning when writing.

6.- Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.

7.- Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audience's interpretation, using prewriting devices, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing.

Developing these micro- and macroskills in our students will help them on overcome issues of clarity and style that will make their arguments more dynamic and easy to follow, when well-developed these skills students are going to be to produce a better piece of writing.

1.5 Developmental writing stages

Ghaith (2002) considers that not all students of the same age or grade level write in the same way; students go through several developmental writing stages such as;

1   Novice writer (unskilled, unaware, teacher-dependent writer)

- has little, if any, individual style

- has little awareness of writing process

- has undeveloped skills and techniques

- seeks approval from teacher

- is reluctant to revise any writing

- believes good writing comes easily

2 Transitional writer (transitional, self-involved, self-delineating writer)

- needs support and coaching in order to develop

- learns from modeled behaviors

- develops a degree of comfort with the craft

- is anxious to stand alone, yet is uncomfortable with peer collaboration

- develops an awareness of personal needs, interests, and preoccupations

3 Willing writer (peer-involved, willing writer)

- is able to collaborate well with others

- requires external feedback to shape progress

- is able to profit from criticism

- develops objectivity concerning work

- enjoys practicing craft

- develops a sensitivity to audience

4 Independent writer (independent, autonomous writer)

- makes highly objective self-assessments

- has developed a sophisticated personal style

- has developed a writer's voice

- takes risks and experiments

- is self-motivating and self-aware as a writer

- is a craftsperson

Students usually go throught all these four stages when immersed into the writing process, it is the duty of the teacher and the students to make them succeed in the writing task throught guidance and constant monitoring.

1.6 Writing difficulties in the classroom

For many years the teaching of writing focused on the written product rather than on the writing process. In other words, the students' attention was directed to the *what* rather than the *how* of text construction.

Johari (2008) claims that teachers need effective and efficient ways to help students improve their writing. She suggests that the best way to help students to achieve their writing goal is not through manipulative or controlled writing exercises, but rather by paying attention to the process that contribute to a finished piece of writing.

It is a cliché to say that teaching writing skills in English is not easy job. This is not just how students feel, but lamentably is also an opinion shared by many English teachers, who dread the weekly snack of compositions to be marked. Another problem for teachers is that writing classes necessarily involve some repetition and thus boredom ensures; after all, how many exciting essays can be assigned, discussed, and graded, and what variety of procedures can be used for that purpose.

To teach academic writing effectively means dealing with time-consuming processes of drafting and revising while facing the real deadline of producing an acceptable final composition.

Writing in the english-language classroom can become unreal if it is only ever produced for one reader, the teacher, and if its purpose is limited to enabling the teacher to assess the accuracy of the language used (Hedge, 2008).

Harmer (2004) also refers to writing as just one more task that students have to complete because that is what they are supposed to do. He claims that "writing (as one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing) has always formed part of the syllabus in the teaching of English. However, it can be used for a variety of purposes, ranking from being merely a 'backup' for grammar teaching to a major syllabus strand in its own right" (p.31). He also claims that students write a composition in the classroom which the teacher corrects and hands back the next day covered with red ink. The students put the corrected pieces of work in their folders and rarely look at them again.

Based on these stataments, it seems that writing is considered as an unrealistic activity done by students for the teacher. However, it is important that the teacher designs activities in which students produce real texts.

1.7 Why to teach writing?

There are some reasons to teach writing to students. Some of them include reinforcement, language development, learning style and, most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right (Harmer, 2009). These terms will be described below:

a) **Reinforcement** Some students acquire languages in a purely oral/aural way, but most of us benefit greatly from seeing the language written down. The visual demonstrations of language construction is invaluable for both our

understanding of how it all ifts together and as an aid to commiting the new language to memory. Students often find it useful to write sentences using new language shortly after they have studied it.

b) **Language development** We can not be sure, but it seems that the actual process of writing (rather like the process of speaking) helps us to learn as we go along. The mental activity we have to go through in order to construct proper written text is all part of the ongoing learning experience.

c) **Learning style** Some students are fantastically quick at picking up language just by looking and listening. For the rest of us, it may take a little longer. For many learners, the time to think things throught, to produce language in a slowe way, in invaluable. Writing is appropriate for such learners. It can also be a quiet reflective activity instead of the rush and bother of interpersonal face-to-fae communication.

d) **Writing as a skill** By far the most important reason for teaching writing, of course, is that it is a basic language skill, just as important as speaking listening and reading. Students need to know how to write letters, how to put written repots together, how to reply to advetisements – and increasingly, how to write electronic mails. (p.108)

When teaching writing not only students learn to write but they also reinforce someother English learning skills.

1.8 Principles for teaching writing skills

Brown (2007) states that out of all the characteristics of the written word, along with micro- and macroskills and research issues, a number of specific principles for teaching writing skills emerge:

1.8.1 Incorporate practices of good writers

- Focus on a goal or main idea in writing,

- Perceptively gauge their audience,

- Spend some time planning to write,

- Easily let their first ideas flow onto the paper,

- Follow a general organizational plan as they write,

- Solicit and utilize feedback on their writing,

- Are not wedded to certain surface structures,

- Revise their work willingly and efficiently,

- Patiently make as many revisions as needed

Students following these practices have more chances to become proficient writers because they are aware of what they have to incorporate to be good writers and of course produce a good piece of writing.

1.8.2 Balance proces and product

Because writing is a composing process and usually requires multiple drafts before an effective product is created, make sure that students are carefully led through appropriate states in the process of composing. This includes careful attention from

the teacher as a guide and as a responder. At the same time do not get so caught up in the stages leading up to the final product that you lose sight of the ultimate attainment: a clear, articulate, well-organized, effective piece of writing. Teachers have to make sure students see that everything leading up to this final creation was worth the effort. Brown (2007, p.403) This issue will be developed in detail in chapter 2 sections 2.6 and 2.7

1.8.3 Account for cultural/literal backgrounds

If there are some apparent contrasts between students' native traditions and those that the teachers are trying to teach, try to help students to understand what it is, exactly, that they are accustomed to and then, but degrees, bring them to the use of acceptable English rhetoric.

1.8.4 Connect reading and writing

Clearly, students learn to write in part by carefully observing what is already written. That is, they learn by observing, or reading, the written word. By reading and studying a variety of text, students can gain important insights both about how they should write and about subject matter that may become the topic of their writing.

1.8.5 Provide as much authentic writing as possible

Whether writing is real writing of for display, it can still be authentic in that the purposes for writing are clear to the students, the audience is specified overtly, and there is at least some intent to convey meaning. Sharing writing with other students in the class is one way to add authenticity.

These principles can be used by teachers when planning and designing writing activities so students can be able to perform a successful writing task.

1.9 Characteristics of written language

Brown (2007) states that some characteristics of written language from the perspective of a reader need to be set forth:

1.- *Permanence*. Once something is written down and delivered and its final form to its intended audience, the writer abdicates a certain power: the power to ememnd, to clarify, to withdraw.

2.- *Production time*. Given appropriate stretches of time a writer can indeed become a good writer by developing efficient processes for achieving the final product.

3.- *Distance*. One of the thorniest problems writers face is anticipating their audience. That anticipation ranges from general audience characteristics to how specific words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs will be interpreted. The distance factor requires what might be termed cognitive empathy, in that good writer can read their own writing from the perspective of the mind of the targeted audience. Writers need to be able to predict the audience's general knowledge, cultural and literary schemata, specific subject-matter knowledge, and very important how their choice of language will be interpreted.

4.- *Orthography*. Everything from simple greeting to extremely complex ideas is captured through the manipulation of a few dozen letters and other written symbols. Sometimes we take for granted the mastering of the mechanics of English writing by our students. If students are nonliterate in the native language, you must begin at the very beginning with fundamentals of reading and writing

5.- *Complexity*. Writers must learn how to remove redundancy (which may not jibe with their first language rhetorical tradition), how to combine sentences, how to make references to other elements in a text, how to create syntactic and lexical variety, and much more.

6.- *Vocabulary*. Good writers will learn to take advantage of the richness of English vocabulary

7.- *Formality.* Whether a student is filling out a questionnaire or writing a full-blown essay, the conventions of each form must be followed. For EFL students, the most difficult and complex conventions occur in academic writing where students have to learn how to describe, explain, compare, contrast, illustrate, defend, criticize, and argue.

These characteristics should be taken into account so that students can succeed in their writing process journey, of course each characteristic needs to be polished by during the process of learning how to write.

1.10 Types of written language

When students are assigned to produce a written task, they have to determine the type of writing they will need to do in order to decide their topic, purpose, style; so Hedge (1988, p.96) classifies writing as it follows:

PERSONAL WRITING	PUBLIC WRITING	CREATIVE WRITING
diaries	letters of – enquiry	poems
journals	- complaint	stories
shopping lists	- request	rhymes
reminders for oneself	form filling	drama
packing lists	applications (for	songs
addresses	memberships)	autobiography
recipies		
SOCIAL WRITING	**STUDY WRITING**	**INSTITUTIONAL WRITING**
letters	making notes while reading	agendas
invitations	taking notes from lectures	minutes
notes – of condolence	making a card index	memoranda
-of thanks	summaries	reports
- of congratulations	synopses	reviews
cablegrams	reviews	contracts
telephone messages	reports of – experiments	business letters
instructions – to friends	- workshops	public notices
- to family	- visits	advertisements
	essays	posters
	bibliographies	instructions
		speeches
		applications
		curriculum vitae
		specifications
		note-making (doctors or other professionals)

1.11 Types of classroom writing performance

While various genres of written texts abound, classroom writing performances is, by comparison, limited. Brown (2007) considers the following five major categories as classroom writing performance:

1.11.1. Imitative, or writing down

At the beginning level of learning to write, students will simply "write down" English letters, words, and possible sentences in order to learn the conventions of the orthographic code, some forms of dictation fall into this category, although dictations can serve to teach and test higher-order processing as well. Dictations typically involve the following steps:

a) Teacher reads a short paragraph once or twice at normal speed.

b) Teacher reads the paragraph in short phrase units of three or four words each, and each unit is followed by a pause.

c) During the pause, students write exactly what they hear.

d) Teacher then reads the whole paragraph once more at normal speed so students can check their writing.

e) Scoring of students' written work can utilize a number of rubrics for assigning points. Usually spelling and punctuation errors are not considered as severe grammatical errors.

1.11.2. Intensive, or controlled

Writing is sometimes used as a production mode for learning, reinforcing, or testing grammatical concepts.This intensive writing typically appears in controlled written grammar exercises. This type of writing does not allow much, if any, creativity on the part of the writer.A common form of controlled writing is to present a paragraph to students in which they have to alter a given structure throughout.

Guided writing loosens the teacher's control but still offers a series of stimulators. Yet, another form of controlled writing is a dicto-comp. here, a paragraph is read at a normal speed, usually two or three times; then the teacher asks students to rewrite

the paragraph to the best of their recollection of the reading. In one of several variations of the dicto-comp technique, the teacher, after reading the passage, puts key words from the paragraph, in sequence, on the board as cues for the students.

1.11.3. Self-writing

A significant proportion of classroom writing may be devoted to self-writing, or writing with only the self in mind as an audience. The most salient instance of this category in classrooms is not taking, where students take notes during a lecture for the purpose of later recall. Other note taking may be done in the margins of books and on odd scraps of paper.

Diary or journal writing also falls into this category. However, in many circumstances a dialogue journal, in which a student records thoughts, feelings and reactions and which an instructor reads and responds to, while ostensibly written for oneself, has two audiences.

1.11.4. Display writing

For all language students, short-answer exercises, essay examinations, and research reports will involve an element of display. For academically bound students, one of the academic skills that they need to master is a whole array of display writing techniques.

1.11.5. Real writing

While virtually every classroom writing task will have an element of display writing in it, some classroom writing aims at the genuine communication of messages to an

audience in need of those messages. The two categories of real and display writing are actually two ends of a continuum, and in between the two extremes lie some combination of display and real writing. There are three subcategories that illustrate how reality can be injected (Brown 2007).

a) Academic. The language experience approach gives groups of students opportunities to convey genuine information to each other. Content-based instruction encourages the exchange of useful information, and some of this learning uses the written word. Group problem-solving tasks, especially those that relate to curent issues and other persoanlly relevant topics, may have a writing component in which information is genuinely sought and conveyed. Peer-editing work adds to what would otherwise be an audience of one (the instructor) and provides real writing opportunity. In certain ESP and EAP courses, students may exchange new information with each other and with the instructor.

b) Vocational/technical. Quite a variety of real writing can take place in classes of students studying English for advancement in their occupation. Real letters can be written; genuine directions for some operation or assembly might be given; and actual forms can be filled out. These possibilities are even greater in what has come to be called "English in the workplace," where EFL is offered within companies and corporations.

c) Personal. In virtually any EFL class, diaries, letters, post cards, notes, personal messages, and other information writing can take place, especially within the context of an interactive classroom. While certain tasks may be somewhat contrived, nevertheless the genuine exchange for information can happen.

CHAPTER 2. APPROACHES AND ACTIVITIES TO TEACHING WRITING

There are several approaches to teaching writing that are presented by Raimes (1983) as follows:

2.1 The controlled-to-free approach

In the 1950s and early 1960, the audio-lingual method dominated second-language learning. This method emphasized speech and writing served to achieve mastery of grammatical and syntactic forms. Hence teachers developed and used techniques to enable studentS to achieve this mastery. The controlled-to-free approach in is sequential: students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by changing questions to statements, present to past, or plural to singular. They might also change words to clauses or combine sentences. With these controlled compositions, it is relatively easy to for students write and yet avoid errors, which makes error correction easy. Students are allowed to try some free composition after they have reached an intermediate level of proficiency. As such, this approach stress on grammar, syntax, and mechanics. It emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality.

2.2 The free-writing approach

This approach stresses writing quantity rather than quality. Teachers who use this approach assign vast amounts of free writing on given topics with only minimal correction. The emphasis in this approach is on content and fluency rather than on accuracy and form. Once ideas are down on the page, grammatical accuracy and organization follow. Thus, teachers may begin their classes by asking students to

write freely on any topic without worrying about grammar and spelling for five or ten minutes. Teachers do not correct these pieces of free writing. They simply read them and may comment on the ideas the writer expressed. Alternatively, some students may volunteer to read their own writing aloud to the class. Concern for "audience" and "content" are seen as important in this approach.

2.3 The paragraph-pattern approach

Instead of accuracy of grammar or fluency of content, the Paragraph-Pattern-Approach stresses on organization. Students copy paragraphs and imitate model passages. They put scrambled sentences into paragraph order. They identify general and specific statements and choose to invent an appropriate topic sentence or insert or delete sentences. This approach is based on the principle that in different cultures people construct and organize communication with each other in different ways.

2.4 The grammar-syntax-organizations approach

This approach stresses on simultaneous work on more than one composition feature. Teachers who follow this approach maintain that writing can not be seen as composed of separate skills which are learned sequentially. Therefore, student should be trained to pay attention to organization while they also work on the necessary grammar and syntax. This approach links the purpose of writing to the forms that are needed to convey message.

2.5 The communicative approach

This approach stresses the purpose of writing and the audience for it. Student writers are encouraged to behave like writers in real life and ask themselves the crucial questions about purpose and audience:

Why am I writing this?
Who will read it?

Traditionally, the teacher alone has been the audience for student writing. But some feel that writers do their best when writing is truly a communicative act, with a writer writing for a real reader. As such, the readership may be extended to classmate and pen pals.

2.6 The product approach

Camirelli (2008) argues that the product (or model text) approach came about in the late 70's to early 80's and sees writing as being primarily about linguistic knowledge. Attention is given to the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices. In EFL contexts, it is rooted in Behaviorist theory and requires the learner to manipulate fixed patterns which are learnt by imitation. Proponents of the product approach see the composing process as being linear and consisting of four stages which are in line with the teaching structure of Present, Practice and Produce which emerged at around the same time. These stages are:

2.6.1 Familirazation

Model texts are read, and then features of the genre are highlighted. This makes students aware of certain features

2.6.2 Controlled and Guided

This consists of controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in isolation. This stage aim at giving learners guided practice with increasing freedom to help them practice.

2.6.3 Organization of ideas

This stage is very important. Those who favour this approach believe that the organisation of ideas is more important than the ideas themselves and as important as the control of language.

2.6.4 Free writing

This is the final result of the learning process. This is where the learners are finally given a free reign and can produce by themselves.

But at the same time, product approach is always criticized to attach too much importance to the final products than process skills. If we only evaluate the products based on preconceived and fixed notions about good writing, we are undervaluing students' skills and knowledge which they bring from outside, the classroom as social individuals (Badger & White, 2000). Writing activities are something no more than grammatical exercises. Writing classes are teacher-dominated. And the writers are

model and rules observers rather than creators of words. This is why my students find writing disinteresting.

Contrary to Camirelli (2008), White (1988), Jordan (1997) and Escholz (1980) state, the shortcomings of this approach is that the very nature of this sequence provides little or no insight into actual processes involved in managing to arrive at the final product.

Clenton (2003) the product approach to writing focuses on the end result of the act of composition; i.e. the final draft of a para, letter, an essay, story and so on. The writing teachers who subscribe to the product approach are more concerned to see that the end products are readable, grammatically correct and obey discourse conventions relating to the main points, supporting details and so on. The writing teachers provide short-cut ways to help learners reach the product. Some of these short-cuts are; copying and imitation, carrying out sentence expansion from cue words and developing sentences and paragraphs from models of various sorts. He also summarizes some of these quick tips. Students in the classes adopting the product approach, would find themselves studying model texts and attempting various exercises aimed towards drawing attention to relevant features of a text. These exercises would require students to check comprehension by completing sentences or adding logical connectors following which, in a final exercise, students would produce parallel texts based on their own information. He further adds that the product approach demands that a student focuses, sequentially on model form and duplication.

2.7 The process approach

Hedge (2000) argues that writing is the result of employing strategies to manage the composing process, which is one of gradually developing a text. It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It is a complex process which is neither easy not spontaneous for many second language writers.

Murray (1972) claims that the process itself can be divided into three stages: *prewriting, writing* and *rewriting*. The amount of time a writer spends in each stage depends on his personality, his work habits, his maturity as a craftsman, and the challenge of what he is trying to say. It is not a rigid lock-step process, but most writers most of the time pass through these three stages which are described below:

2.7.1 Prewriting

It is everything that takes place before the first draft. Prewriting usually takes about 85% of the writer's time. It includes the awareness of his world from which his subject is born. In prewriting, the writer focuses on that subject. Spots and audience, chooses a form which may carry his subject to his audience. Prewriting may include research and daydreaming, note-making and outlining, title-writing and lead-writing.

Before actual composition begins, there is always a period of getting ready, and this period can be a few moments, a few hours, days, weeks, or even years. Fortunately, there are things teachers can do to stimulate their thinking and come up with ideas.

These ways of discovering ideas are called prewriting. Below some common prewriting activities Ross (1981) are described below:

2.7.1.1 Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a less formal activity for invention, one in which a writer jots down, as quickly as he can, notes or fragments of notes concerning his topic. The notes can be general or specific; it depends on how far along the writer is in the writing process. The point is to get the writer to explore freely his topic, without the pressure of structure, grammar, or style. Sometimes these ideas lead to very interesting arguments.

2.7.1.2 Clustering

Student will think of words associated with a chosen topic.

2.7.1.3 Nutshelling

Nutshelling is the simple process of trying to explain the argument to someone in a few sentences -- that is, in a nutshell. When a student tries to put his/her thoughts in a nutshell, he/she comes to see just how his/her thoughts fit together, how each thought is relevant to the others, what the overall "point" of her thoughts is. In short, the student is involved in the process of making meaning out of information -- a process absolutely essential to the writing process.

Teachers can help students to nutshell simply by asking them, perhaps even before they read their paper, what it is that they are trying to say. A student is doing a paper

on the writing process. He/she has a lot to say about inventive ways for structuring paragraphs, sentences, and the paper as a whole. He/she tells the teacher that he/she thinks that the five-paragraph model stinks, and that teachers contradict themselves when they teach students to use that model, but also tell the teacher to experiment with their ideas. He/she also thinks that the writing process is a complicated, mystical experience.

2.7.1.4. Aristotle's Topoi

In Aristotle's day, rhetoric was a formalized system for expressing one's views. By "formalized," I mean that Aristotle defined very specific systems and structures that a writer or an orator was to follow as he developed his argument. These systems included ways of coming up with an argument as well as options for that argument's structure.

2.7.1.5 Tagmemics

Tagmemics is another simple activity for invention that unfortunately bears a fancy name. Tagmemics is a system that allows a student to look at a single object from three different perspectives. The hope is that one of these perspectives (or even all three) can help determine a subject for writing. Tagmemics involves seeing students' topic:

1. As a particle (as a thing in itself)

2. As a wave (as a thing changing over time)

3. As part of a field (as a thing in its context)

2.7.1.6 Freewriting

Students sit down for a period of time, perhaps fifteen minutes, and write on a subject. They do not stop writing for any reason. They do not even pause. As he/she writes, they don't have to try to decide if his/her ideas are good or not. Also, they do not have to worry about spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization, or neatness. Just put down in any way they can every idea that occurs to them. If they run out of ideas, writing anything: famous sayings, the alphabet, names of their family members or friends-anything, can be helpful. After a while, new ideas will come to them, and they can put them down. After several minutes of freewriting, students will discover they have written at least one idea that they can refine and develop for their theme.

2.7.1.7 Listing

Another useful prewriting activity is listing. To do this, students list the main ideas they have on a subject. Once students have their list of ideas, they have to do some more listing. This time, though, list the subpoints that come to mind for each of the main ideas in their first list. If they have four major points in the first list, they would go on to write four more lists. Five main points in the first list would mean five more lists, and so on.

After listing the ideas under the major points, they will have quite a few ideas that can be developed in a theme. Students may decide to use all of them or only some of them. They may also decide to freewrite on some of the ideas in their list or answer questions about them. Perhaps students will want to do both.

2.7.1.8 Answering questions

Very often students can discover ideas by asking themselves the right questions and then putting the answers in writing. The answers may well contain ideas they can shape and develop in their theme.

Below is a list of questions students might try answering. Not all the questions will be useful for a particular assignment, so students will have to decide which questions should be answered.

- What happened?

- When did it happen?

- Why did it happen?

- How did it happen?

- To whom did it happen?

- Who did it? (Who is responsible?)

- Why did that person do it?

- What was the result?

- Where did it happen?

- How did people feel?

- How long did it take?

- Could it happen again?

- What did it look (sound, smell, feel, taste) like?

- How do you know?

- What is your reaction to it?

- What kind of person was involved?

- What does it mean?

- What are the good points?

- What are the bad points?

- What other things is it like?

- What other things is it different from?

- How is it made?

- How is it used?

- How is it done?

- What are its parts?

- What happened first (second, third)?

- Why is it important?

- What if it hadn't happened?

The question-answer technique can often be combined successfully with freewriting. Many writers like to do freewriting and then answer questions on some of the ideas their freewriting produced.

2.7.1.9 Letter writing

Sometimes it is useful to pretend students are writing a letter to a friend on the subject of their theme. Let's say, for example, that he/she must write a theme about how he/she feels about university life, and he/she is having trouble coming up with ideas. Try writing a letter to someone he/she knows well and tell that person how he/she feels about university life. Because they may be more relaxed writing to a friend than for a teacher, the ideas may come more easily. Then take the ideas from the letter and develop them in his/her theme.

2.7.1.10 Interviewing yourself

The student asks his/herself questions to discover topics that interests him/her.

2.7.1.11 Keeping a journal

Journal writing can be an interesting and rewarding experience. Each day students take some time to record in a notebook their thoughts and feelings about anything significant they observed or were involved in that day. A journal does not tell so much what happened as it explains how they felt about or reacted to what happened. Students can write about something that troubled, pleased, angered, or amused them. A journal has many uses. For one, it can come in handy with their ideas need for a theme; students can look through their journal for ideas to include in their writing.

2.7.1.12 Talking to others

When students are trying to think of ideas, it can be helpful to talk to other people and find out what they think. The ideas of others can often trigger your own thinking on a subject. Of course, the teacher does not want the studet's writing to include only what other people think. Instead, students would want to use other people's thoughts as a starting point-something that motivates them to come up with ideas. This activity can be particularly effective when combined with one of the other prewriting activities.

Once the student has the topic, he/she can start writing his/her thesis sentence.

2.7.2 Writing

It is the act of producing a first draft, it is the fastest part of the process, and the most frightening, for it is a commitment. When you complete a draft you know how much,

and how little, you know. And the writing of this first draft – rough, searching, unfinished- may take as little as one percent of the writer's time.

During this stage the following aspects can be taken into account:

a. Think about your audience

The way students write and the information they provide depends on their audience – the people who will read their writing. These are questions they have to keep in mind as they write.

- Who is going to read my writing?

- What does my reader already know about the topic?

- What will be interesting to my reader?

- What questions will my reader have?

b. Think about your purpose for writing

It helps to have a purpose for writing other than simply completing a class assignment. As you write, keep in mind that you are also trying to accomplish one or more of these goals.

- To inform

- To entertain

- To persuade

c. Think about how to organize your ideas

Ask yourself questions as you experiment with different ways to organize your ideas.

- How can I group my ideas in paragraphs?

- What is the focus and purpose of each paragraph?

- In what order should I present my ideas?

d. Think of an interesting way to begin the piece of writing

It helps to start with an idea or some information that gets your reader's attention.

- Begin with a question. (do you know...?)

- Begin with a personal story. (When I was...)

- Begin with an interesting quote.

- Start with a description.

- Start with an interesting fact.

e. Think about how to end the piece of writing

Look back at your purpose for writing and decide what you want your readers to be thinking about and how you want them to feel when they finish reading.

- Do I want to repeat my main idea at the end?

- Do I want to end with a recommendation?

- Would a quote work at the end?

If students do take into consideration these aspects while writing, then they will have a great opportunity to succeed in their final written task.

2.7.3 Rewriting

It is the reconsideration of subject, form, and audience, it is researching, rethinking, redesigning, rewriting-and finally, line-by-line editing, the demanding, satisfying

process of making each word right. It may take much time the hours required for a first draft, perhaps the remaining fourteen percent of the time the writer spends on the project.

2.8 Defining writing as a pedagogical process

The most important principle of process pedagogy is that writing is the result of a very complex, highly individualized process. Before process pedagogy, writing classes generally ignored the writing process. Teachers assigned papers, graded them, and then handed them back. They attended to the product -- its clarity, originality, and correctness -- but they did not attend to the writing process. Nor did they attend to the writers themselves.

The process theorists of the sixties and seventies took issue with this approach to teaching writing. After all, well-written essays do not fall from the sky. Rather, they are the result of a long, laborious, intensely personal process that in which writers must address several questions, ranging from what do I write about? To who is my audience? To how do I structure my essay? To what sort of language and voice should I use?

Process theorists believe that writing can be understood as the culmination of several steps in a complicated process. Furthermore, they feel that these steps -- which include prewriting, writing, rewriting, and all their attendant strategies -- can be talked about and modeled. In short, writing-as-a-process can be taught.

Writing process is a pedagogical term that appears in the research of Janet Emig who published *The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders* in 1971. The term marks a shift from examining the products of writing to the composing process of writers.

Imtiaz (2003) says that this focus on encouraging students to see writing as an ongoing, recursive process from conception of the idea through publication must be promoted in the classroom. She argues that the central concern of writing teachers should be composing processes rather than texts. The writing processes of a few high school students were audio taped and analyzed by her.

Another important work contributed in this area is of Flower and Hayes (1981) who identify composing as a complex problem-solving activity, responding to a rhetorical situation in the form of a text. Their work, largely known as **cognitive process model**, represents the internal process of the writer's mind and looks at composing as a complex problem-solving activity.

2.8.1 A Recursive Process

Students of written composition have supported the contention of Flower and Hayes' (1981) cognitive process model of writing. Their research has demonstrated that writing, far from being a linear process, is a recursive process. The recursiveness in writing makes writing a process, which is continuously evolving, rejecting ideas, which may not be important, and thereby making it a dynamic process of composition.

Dheram (1996) also considers writing as to be as a critical and mutually benefiting interaction between the cognitive and physical process, which gives the text its particular form.

Davis and Pearse (2002) also mention that writing involves cognitive skills such as:

- Gathering information and ideas relevant to the topic, and discarding what is not relevant.

- Organizing the information and ideas into a logical sequence.

- Structuring the sequence into sections and paragraphs.

- Expressing the information and ideas in a written draft.

- Editing the draft and writing out a final text.

2.9 Implications of teaching process and not product

According to Murray (1972) these are some of the implications of teaching process, not product.

Implication No. 1. The text of the writing course is the student's own writing. Students examine their own evolving writing and that of their classmates, so that they study writing while it is still a matter of choice, word by word.

Implication No. 2. The student finds his own subject. It is not the job of the teacher to legislate the student's truth. It is the responsibility of the student to explore his own

world with his own language, to discover his own meaning. The teacher supports but does not direct this expedition to the student's own truth.

Implication No. 3. The student uses his own language. Too often, as writer and teacher Thomas Williams points out, we teach English to our students as if were a foreign language. Actually, most of our students have learned a great deal of language if they are allowed to embark on a serious search for their own truth.

Implication No. 4. The student should have the opportunity to write all the drafts necessary for him to discover what he has to say on this particular subject. Each new draft, of course, is counted as equal to a new paper. You are not teaching a product. You are teaching a process.

Implication No. 5. The student is encouraged to attempt any form of writing which may help him discover and communicate what he has to say.

The process which produces "creative" and "functional" writing is the same. You are not teaching products such as business letters and poetry, narrative and exposition. You are teaching a product students can use – now and in the future – to produce whatever product his subject and his audience demand.

Implication No. 6. Mechanics come last. It is important to the writer, once he has discover what he has to say, that nothing get between him and his reader. He must break only those traditions of written communication which would obscure his meaning.

Implication No. 7. There must be time for the writing process to take place and time for it to end. The writer must work within the stimulating tension of unpressured time to think and dream and stare out windows, and pressured time – the deadline – to which the writer must deliver.

Implication No. 8. Papers are examined to see what other choices the writer might make. The primary responsibility for seeing the choices is the student. He is learning a process. His papers are always unfinished, evolving, until the end of the marking period. A grade finishes a paper, the way publication usually does. The student writer is not graded on drafts any more than a concert pianist is judged on his practice sessions rather than on his performance. The student writer is graded on what he has produced at the end of the writing process.

Implication No. 9. The students are individuals who must explore the writing process in their own way, some fast, some slow, whatever it takes for them, within the limits of the course deadlines, to find their own way to their own truth.

Implication No. 10. There are no rules, no absolutes, just alternatives. What works one time may not another. All writing is experimental.

None of these implications require a special schedule, exotic training, extensive new materials or gadgetry, new classrooms, or an increase in federal, state, or local funds. They do not even require a reduced teaching load. What they do require is a teacher

who will respect and respond to his students, not for what they have done, but what they may do; not for what they have produced, but for what they may produced, if they are given an opportunity to see writing as a process, not a product.

2.10 The genre approach

According to Paltridge (2001), "The term genre was first introduced in the area of ESP in 1981, in an ESP Journal article by Elaine Tarone and her colleagues on the language of scientific reports and in Swales' (1981) study of introductions to scientific reports" (p.2). Swales's model has been used with great success in the analysis of research introductions in various academic disciplines in English and across disciplines as well as in other languages (Crookes, 1986; Swales and Najjar, 1987; Brett, 1994; Posteguillo, 1999; Samraj, 2002, Fakhri, 2004). Other authors have analysed different rhetorical structures of research articles such as discussion sections (Dudley-Evans, 1986). Bhatia (1993), on the other hand, has investigated sales promotion letters, job applications, and legislative documents.

Johns (2003 p.196) argues that "genre has been used to capture the social nature of oral and written discourse. In the written discourse, many factors including the purposes and functions of a text, the roles and relationships of readers and writers, the context in which the text is produced and processed, the formal text features, the use of content, and even what the text is called are determined in and by the culture or community in which these texts are produced or processed." Therefore according to Paltridge (2001, p.6), "genres need to be considered not as patterns of texts in isolation but in relation to the context of production and interpretation and to the aims

and assumptions of particular discourse communities." Swales (1990) provides a definition of genre in terms of communicative purpose as he states that:

> "A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style" (p.58).

Bhatia (1997) also defines genres in terms of their communicative purpose: "Genres are essentially defined in terms of the use of language in conventionalized communicative settings" (p.181).

In a genre approach to writing, students study texts in the genre they are going to writing before they embark on their own writing. A genre approach is especially appropriate for students of English for Specific Purposes. But it is also highly useful for general English students if we want them, even at low levels, to produce written work they can be proud of (Harmer, 2001).

Genre modelling in schools implies the following stages:

1. Introducing a genre- modelling a genre implicitly through reading to on by the class.

2. Focusing a genre- modelling a genre explicitly by naming its stages.

3. Jointly negotiating a genre- teacher and class jointly composing the genre under focus; the teachers guides the composition of the text through questions and comments that provide scaffolding for the stages of the genre.

4. Researching- selecting material for reading; note making and summarising; assembling information before writing.

5. Drafting- a first attempt at individually constructing the genre under focus.

6. Consultation- teacher- pupil consultation, involving direct reference to the meanings of the text.

7. Publishing- writing a final draft that may be published in class. (Martin and Rothery, 1987cited in Hyland 2002, 82)

CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS

Although much has been learned about writing strategies, it is also well known that so much more lies undiscovered. The attempt of this research paper is not to impose an specific approach or an specific writing strategie but to provide a variety of approaches and strategies from which the teacher can select the one that he considers the one that fullfills his students' needs in order to build on students their own language abilities, backgrounds, and expectations of writing to help them express their ideas in a written way. The teacher should be aware that the approaches and strategies mentioned in this paper will not work by themselves, the teacher has to support and manage a writing process, he should also take time to ensure that students understand how the classroom structure and instructional activities work together. It is important that the teacher creates an atmosphere that allows and encourages students to feel safe taking risks in order to develop a good piece of writing.

These are some general recomendations that the teacher can follow when teaching writing:

3.1 General recommendations

- Pay attention to the writing process by providing opportunities for learners to brainstorm, plan and revise.

- Give the learners something meaningful and motivating to write about.

- Make sure the learners will be alble to do the task with the language level they have.

- Asa general rule, do not set the writing task as homework without preparing it first in class.

- Encourage learners to consider their *audience* and the *genre,* as well as the *purpose* of writing.

- Be an interested audience by responding to the ideas in the learner's work.

- Select some appropriate aspects of content to consider s you assess and comment on them when giving feedback.

- Be success-oriented in order to foster the learners' self-confidence.

- Encourage the learners to reread their work and to make the necessary corrections.

- Let your students know what you will be assessing when you mark.

- Consider different ways to "publish" learners' best writing.

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