Second Edition

Writing

Tricia Hedge
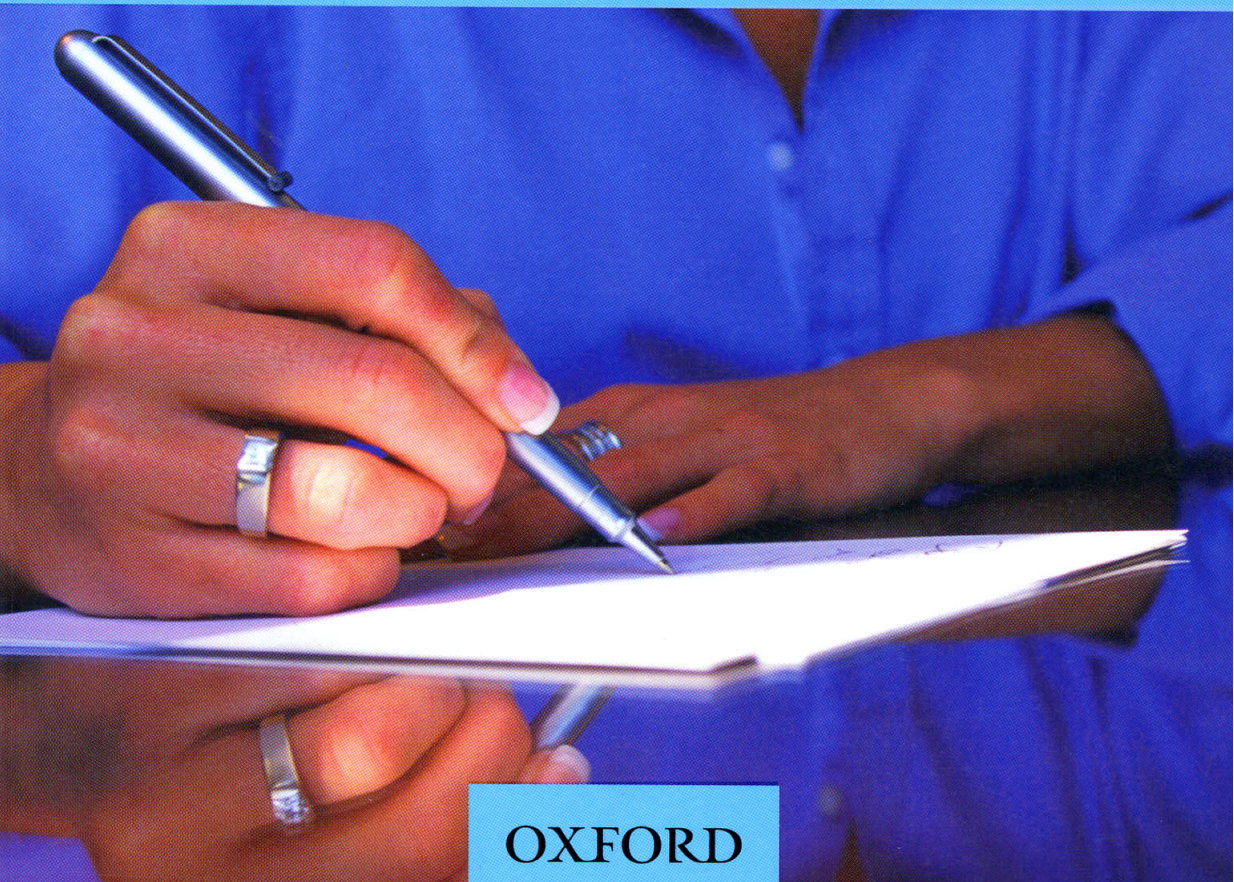
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Acknowledgements

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The author and series editor

Tricia Hedge began her teaching career in Britain, teaching English to first and second language learners in secondary schools, where her interest in writing projects first developed. Since 1972 she has taught students and teachers in universities in Sweden, Japan, and the UK on a wide variety of programmes: English for Academic Purposes, English for Professional Purposes, and both pre-service and in-service teacher education. She has always maintained a strong interest in the teaching of writing, working with students to help them improve their writing skills, exploring writing techniques and tasks with them, and learning from the process. She is now a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at Nottingham University, where she works with teachers from around the world.

Tricia's international reputation has led her to travel extensively in order to undertake writing workshops with teachers and to work on writing in development projects in Central Europe. Her recent research has been concerned with writing task development and forms of verbal feedback in the teaching of writing. Her other books for teachers include *Using Readers in the Language Classroom* (Macmillan 1985), *Power, Pedagogy, and Practice* (1994, co-edited with Norman Whitney), and *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom* (2000), the last two published by Oxford University Press. Tricia was designer and founder editor of the *Oxford Bookworms* series of graded readers and was editor of *ELT Journal* between 1992 and 1996.

Alan Maley worked for The British Council from 1962 to 1988, serving as English Language Officer in Yugoslavia, Ghana, Italy, France, and China, and as Regional Representative in South India (Madras). From 1988 to 1993 he was Director-General of the Bell Educational Trust, Cambridge. From 1993 to 1998 he was Senior Fellow in the Department of English Language and Literature of the National University of Singapore, and from 1998 to 2003 he was Director of the graduate programme at Assumption University, Bangkok. Among his publications are *Literature* (in this series), *Beyond Words, Sounds Interesting, Sounds Intriguing, Words, Variations on a Theme*, and *Drama Techniques in Language Learning* (all with Alan Duff), *The Mind's Eye* (with Francoise Grellet and Alan Duff), *Learning to Listen* and *Poem into Poem* (with Sandra Moulding), *Short and Sweet*, and *The English Teacher's Voice*.

Foreword

When the first edition of *Writing* was published in 1988, there was indeed a dearth of suitable material for the teaching of writing. The fact that this situation has now changed somewhat is due in no small measure to the influence this book has had on the teaching of writing over the past 15 years. It is no exaggeration to say that *Writing* has become a classic in its field, and an essential part of any writing teacher's toolkit remarkable for its common-sense, practical, and non-technical approach to this complex skills area.

The new edition of this hugely influential book has taken into account feedback from teachers worldwide and the developments in the teaching of writing since it was first published.

Essentially, however, it still focuses on answering the key questions for the teaching of writing:

- How do we ensure that writing is not just a mechanical exercise but that it fulfils some real communicative purpose for a real audience of readers?
- How can we help students to better understand and develop the writing process?
- How can we guide students to shape and polish what they have written so that it conforms to discourse and genre requirements?
- How can we give feedback on students' writing which is both helpful, non-threatening, and supportive?

These four questions constitute the framework of the book.

One of the most positive features of the book is that it practises what it preaches, so that the writing demonstrates what good writing should be like. The introductory sections to each chapter, taken together, in themselves constitute a key text for the theory and practice of writing.

We are confident that the second edition of *Writing* will continue to be an essential title for both pre-service and in-service teacher training courses, for post-graduate programmes, and for individuals faced with the problems of teaching writing everywhere.

Alan Maley

Changes to this edition

This second edition of *Writing* aims to create a careful balance between the best of the old and the need for new and interesting activities for teachers and learners, taking into account feedback on the first edition from teachers worldwide.

The introduction to each chapter follows the same pattern as before: the aim is to introduce current ideas about writing, the sources of these ideas, and the implications for classroom teaching. Each chapter then provides a set of activities which have been piloted with students from a number of different countries. Most of the activities offer new material; some provide new procedures for writing; others consolidate procedures from the first edition with new content and examples. In response to requests from readers, Chapter 4, 'Improving', is now longer, containing discussion and examples of marking strategies and substantially more activities for revision during planning and drafting. This reflects the increasing interest among teachers about how to intervene successfully during the writing process using feedback in various ways.

The development of the Internet has led to the inclusion of some net-related activities and references. Web addresses (URLs) have been provided in an Appendix for sites relating to sources of help in writing, e-pals, advice and activities for teachers, journals providing practical articles on classroom writing, and discussion groups for both learners and teachers. Sites are also listed which encourage student independence by publishing their writing and inviting peer response. We hope these listings will be helpful although we cannot, of course, guarantee that they will all remain valid.

This resource book is also now supported by a website devoted to the Resource Book for Teachers series, to be found at http://www.oup.com/elt/teacher/rbt, and we welcome your feedback. There you will find, among other things, extra activities, downloadable worksheets, author articles, and competitions. There is still more at the OUP Teachers' Club at http://www.oup.com/elt/global/teachersclub.

Introduction

Writers and writing

It is not uncommon to find great writers musing on the difficulties they experience in writing. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote: 'All good writing is swimming under water and holding your breath.' The English poet Lytton Strachey put it like this: 'First I write one sentence. Then I write another. That's how I write. And so I go on. But I have a feeling writing ought to be like running through a field.' And the much-quoted words of T.S. Eliot reflect the same sense of frustration:

> Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
> Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure.

As I have often said to the teachers I work with on courses about writing, if T.S. Eliot describes his attempts at writing as a failure, what chance do the rest of us have? But writing even of a more mundane kind is hardly easy or spontaneous for most of us, and the difficulties are exacerbated when writing in a second language. So perhaps we should begin by asking why writing can be a difficult task and why it is that for large numbers of English-language students writing seems to pose greater problems than other language skills?

One reason is that writing is detached from the wide range of expressive possibilities in speech. A writer is unable to exploit all the devices available to a speaker such as gesture, body movement, facial expression, pitch and tone of voice, stress, and hesitation. A speaker can backtrack or clarify and revise ideas as listeners question or disagree. A writer has to compensate for all of these disadvantages.

Compared with speech, effective writing requires a number of things: a high degree of organization in the development of information, ideas or arguments; a high degree of accuracy so that there is no ambiguity of meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers.

It is these demands which present particular problems to learners of English as an additional or foreign language. Even those who are proficient writers in their first language have to acquire a wide language base from which to make appropriate choices. They may also find that confusing differences exist between the conventions of writing in the first language and English. For example, the level of

formality or patterns of presenting information in letters may differ, or the accepted method of setting out arguments in discursive writing may vary.

The purpose of this resource book is to look at writers and writing in the English language classroom and to offer suggestions for helping students overcome the difficulties they experience in developing clear, effective writing in English.

In general terms the resources are presented for teachers of teenage or adult learners of English, in that the content of the activities is conceptually appropriate to these age groups. However, many of the principles at work in the activities are equally applicable to the writing development of younger learners, and the techniques could be incorporated into writing activities with content suitable for younger age groups.

The resources are also intended primarily for teachers of general purpose classes. The activities have been used in and are adaptable to a range of contexts: the multilingual group of EFL short course students, the ESL group of ethnic minority students learning English as an additional or second language, and the monolingual class in schools and adult institutions around the world. Some of the activities have been derived from teaching college students who need English writing for academic purposes. However, more specialized forms of writing, such as the extended academic essay or business correspondence, are not dealt with here as they require more consideration than a general resource book can usefully provide.

Establishing a framework for writing activities

Writing has been a neglected area of English language teaching for some years. One only has to look at the large number of books which have been available to teachers on reading and the relative scarcity of books on writing to see the imbalance, though in recent years this imbalance has been redressed a little (see Further Reading at the end of this book). It is also only relatively recently that ideas generated from research, initially into first language writing and later into second language writing, have begun to influence the design of writing activities in course books and principles for classroom methodology. These ideas about the writing process and the strategies used by good writers hold thought-provoking implications for teachers who wish to help their students to become good writers.

The approaches and activities presented in this book are based on a number of assumptions about writers and writing which are set out in this Introduction as a framework for the resources presented later. Before reading through them, you may like to reflect on your own approach to writing, your own classroom practice, and the assumptions these are based on. These questions might guide your reflection:

1 Why do you ask students to write in their English classes? Make a list of the reasons for writing in English classes.
2 Do your students have to pass examinations in English? What kinds of writing are required by the examinations? Are they realistic in relation to the kinds of writing students may have to do in their future studies or work?
3 What kind of 'texts' do students write in your classes? Make a list of typical writing activities they do. How much time do they spend on:
—writing sentences?
—writing 'whole texts', for example, descriptions, narratives, etc?
4 Can you introspect on your own development of writing skills in a first or second language? What difficulties did you experience?
5 To what extent do you think writing problems are to do with language or to do with other aspects of writing as a skill to be developed?
6 Do your students do much in-class writing, with help from you as they try to write?
7 Do you encourage students to work together during writing, acting as readers for each other, commenting on and correcting each other's work?

The questions reflect some of the currently debated issues in relation to the teaching of writing and its role in the learning of English. These issues are debated in the four chapters of the book, each of which provides a rationale for the resources. The questions also imply possibilities for classroom practice which are developed in the sets of activities in each chapter.

The assumptions made about writing in this resource book can be listed and elaborated in the following way:

1 The reasons for writing

In recent years I have asked groups of English language teachers from around the world why they ask their students to write in the classroom. They have provided an interesting set of purposes for writing which includes the following points:

- for pedagogic purposes, to help students learn the system of language
- for assessment purposes, as a way of establishing a learner's progress or proficiency
- for real purposes, as a goal of learning, to meet students' needs
- for humanistic purposes, to allow quieter students to show their strengths
- for creative purposes, to develop self-expression
- for classroom management purposes, as a calm activity which settles students down
- for acquisitional purposes, as a careful mode of working with language which enables students to explore and reflect on language in a conscious way
- for educational purposes, to contribute to intellectual development and to develop self-esteem and confidence

A good deal of writing in the English-language classroom is undertaken for the first purpose listed above, as an aid to learning, for example, to consolidate the learning of new structures or vocabulary or to help students remember new items of language. In this context, the role of writing is little different from its role in any other curriculum subject: it allows students to see how they are progressing and to get feedback from the teacher; and it allows teachers to monitor and diagnose problems. Much of this writing is at the sentence level. This clearly has its value in language learning, but successful writing depends on more than the ability to produce clear, correct sentences. I am interested in activities that help students to produce whole pieces of communication, to link and develop information, ideas, or arguments for a particular reader or group of readers. It is only in this way that the third purpose listed above can be fulfilled, as these are the requirements of writing in real life.

Writing activities which have whole texts as their outcome relate appropriately to the ultimate goals of those learners who need to write English in their social, educational, or professional lives. Some of our students already know what they need to be able to write in English. Others may be uncertain about the precise nature of their future needs. Our role as teachers is to build communicative potential. Many secondary students have to prove their competence in English and sometimes in other subjects by producing compositions for examinations. In my own experience there have been substantial numbers of students who have no identifiable needs, present or future, for written English, but who enjoy writing, who are motivated to use their language resources in producing stories, essays, and even poems, simply to practise and improve their English. By encouraging the production of whole texts in the classroom, we can provide for these different motivations for writing.

Assumption 1

Classroom writing activities should reflect the ultimate goal of enabling students to write whole texts which form connected, contextualized, and appropriate pieces of communication.

2 The craft of writing

One approach to writing is to look at instances of writing and to analyse the features of written texts. This will tell us something about what students have to produce. It is possible to build up a list of 'crafting skills' that writers need. It would include:

- getting the grammar right
- having a range of vocabulary
- punctuating meaningfully
- using the conventions of layout correctly, for example, in letters
- spelling accurately
- using a range of sentence structures
- linking ideas and information across sentences to develop a topic
- developing and organizing the content clearly and convincingly.

It is also possible to build a checklist of the forms (for example, letters, minutes) and functions (for example, narrative, cause and effect) of written texts and to show students how the features and organization of these different written products differ from one another. In setting and marking work, teachers can focus on one or a number of skills, but ideally within the context of a whole text.

Assumption 2

Students need opportunities to practise various forms and functions of writing and within these to develop the different skills involved in producing written texts.

3 The process of communicating

Except for some personal functions such as reminders, shopping lists, and diaries, writing involves communicating. Most of the writing we do in real life is done with a reader in mind—a friend, a relative, a colleague, an admissions officer, a company, or a public institution. Knowledge of the reader provides the writer with a context, without which it is difficult to know what or how to write. For example, if you ask students to write a description of a town, they need to know why and who for. Does the activity require the kind of description to be found in a visitor's guide, a geography textbook, or a letter to a friend? Each of these might need different content for the description, order it in a certain way, and be written in a formal or informal style.

In other words, the selection of content and style depends on a sense of audience. One of the teacher's tasks is to create contexts and real or imagined audiences for writing.

Assumption 3

When setting writing activities, teachers need to vary the audience, identify who the readers are to be, and try to make every piece of writing fulfil some kind of communicative purpose, either real or simulated. When students understand the context, they are much more likely to write effectively and appropriately.

4 The process of composing

Perhaps the most important insight that writing research has given us is that writers seem to go through certain processes which lead to successful pieces of written work.

They usually start off with some kind of plan in their heads, though the plan will change as their writing gets under way, and the act of writing itself generates further planning or revisions to the plan. They think about who they are writing for and how to influence that 'audience'. They draft out sections of the writing, concentrating first on global organization and getting their meanings down as effectively as possible. Then they review their writing, try to improve it, and move on to looking at 'surface features' such as accurate

grammar, appropriate words, correct punctuation, etc. In other words, we can characterize good writers as people who have a sense of purpose, a sense of audience, and a sense of direction. Unskilled writers tend to be more haphazard and less confident in their writing.

Assumption 4

Classroom writing activities need to be set up in ways that reflect the writing process in good writers. We need to encourage our students to go through a process of planning, organizing, composing, and revising.

5   The process of improving

Helping students with getting ideas together, planning, and drafting is only a part of the teacher's task. Another important role comes with our response to students' writing and the way in which our feedback helps them to improve their work. That response is important for a number of reasons:

a Writing requires a lot of conscious effort from students, so they understandably expect feedback and can become discouraged if it is not forthcoming.

b Learners monitor their writing to a greater extent than they are able to monitor their speech because writing is a more conscious process. It is probably true, therefore, that writing is a more accurate indication of how a student is progressing in English, and it gives teachers opportunities for diagnosing problem areas.

c Writing is easier to revise than speech because it is permanent and available. Teachers can therefore exploit writing for learning in various effective ways.

d We know that good writers constantly review and revise a piece of writing as they create it. Our feedback can help our student writers to develop the strategies of good writers.

Responding positively to the strengths of a student's writing helps to build confidence. Ideally, ticks in the margin and commendations in the comments should provide counterbalance to correction of errors in the script.

Even more significant in current methodology are moves to involve students in revising their own work successfully so that feedback becomes part of the process of writing and a genuine source of learning for them.

Assumption 5

The process of marking, with its traditional focus on error correction by the teacher, needs review and modification into a range of activities involving students in reviewing and revising their work as well as teachers. In other words it becomes a process of improving.

6   Time for writing

There is a widely held belief that in order to be a good writer a student needs to read a lot. This makes sense. It benefits students to be exposed to models of different text types so that they can develop awareness of what constitutes good writing. I would agree that reading is necessary and valuable, but it is not sufficient. My own experience tells me that in order to become a good writer a student needs to write a lot. This is especially true of poor writers who tend to get trapped in a downward spiral of failure; they feel that they are poor writers, so that are not motivated to write and because they seldom practise, they remain poor writers.

This is exacerbated in many classrooms where writing is mainly relegated to a homework activity. It is perhaps not surprising that writing often tends to be an out-of-class activity; many teachers feel that class time, often scarce, is best devoted to oral/aural work and homework to writing, which can then be done at the student's own pace.

However, many students would benefit from classroom practice in writing, for which the teacher can prepare activities with carefully planned stages of planning, drafting, and revision. If poorer writers experience some measure of success in the supportive learning environment of the classroom, they will begin to develop the confidence they need to write more at home, and so start the upward spiral of motivation and improvement.

Assumption 6

Students need time in the classroom for writing. The teacher's task is to select or design activities which support them through the process of producing a piece of writing.

7   Working together on writing

Another good reason for spending classroom time on writing is that it enables students to work together on writing in different ways. Although the teacher's ultimate aim is to develop the writing skills of each student individually, individual students have a good deal to gain from collaborative writing.

Group composition is a good example of an activity in which the classroom becomes a writing workshop, as students are asked to work together in small groups on a writing activity. At each stage in the activity the group interaction contributes in useful ways to the writing process, for example:

- Brainstorming a topic in group discussion produces lots of ideas from which students have to select the most effective and appropriate. Careful selection of content is an important part of the art of good writing.
- Skills of organization and logical sequencing come in to play as the group decides on the overall structure of the piece of writing.

- While writing out a first draft, with one student acting as 'scribe' or secretary, and the other students arguing out the structure of sentences, the choice of words, and the best way to link ideas, there is a spontaneous process of revision in process.

Group composition has the added advantage of enabling students to learn from each other's strengths. It is an activity where weaker writers can learn from stronger ones. It also enables the teacher to move from group to group monitoring the work and helping with the process of composition.

Assumption 7

Collaborative writing in the classroom generates discussion and activities which encourage an effective process of writing.

8   Sources of help in writing

Every writer, whether native-speaker or second-language writer, experiences situations in which they are unable to think of the right word or feel dissatisfied with the sentence structure they have written. We know that good writers focus first on meaning, on getting the ideas or information down on the page. If they are lost for a word, they tend to leave a space or write a similar word in the margin. A second-language writer might put the first-language word in the margin. Then they review what they have written and focus on details, trying to fill in the gaps and improve the uncertain bits. It is at this point that a good writer will turn to a dictionary or a thesaurus or an electronic source such as the *Oxford Phrasebuilder Genie* CD-Rom. If we want our student writers to work in the same way we need to introduce them to sources of help and make sure they can use them effectively. Another book in this series, *Dictionaries*, by Jon Wright, provides useful ideas for this. We can also encourage students to create their own resources. The section 'Creating your own sources of help in writing' in Chapter 4, 'Improving', tries to do this.

Assumption 8

Teachers need to introduce students to sources of help for writing and ensure that they can use them effectively.

9   Extensive writing

The point was made above that students need time for writing in the classroom so that they can build confidence as well as competence. It is also possible to encourage students to engage in out-of-class writing of a personal, non-assessed kind. The important characteristic of extensive writing, whether it is interpreted as extended time spent on writing or the writing of longer texts, is the opportunity it gives for practice. Chapter 1, 'Communicating', contains three activities in its first section, 'Sharing writing', which all have this aim of encouraging extensive writing. It is worth talking to students at the beginning of a course about strategies by which they can help themselves to become better writers (see Activity 4.1, 'Raising awareness about writing'), and extensive writing is one such strategy.

Assumption 9

Encouraging extensive writing outside the classroom is a worthwhile activity as it gives students opportunities to develop their competence and confidence.

10 Teachers as models

Students can be greatly encouraged to write and to see writing as a pleasurable activity, if they are able to observe their teachers as people who turn to writing naturally and who enjoy it. There are many opportunities throughout this book for teachers to write letters, stories, etc. for their students. There are also many opportunities for teachers to engage in writing their own response to a task, which could be prepared while students are writing, if conditions allow, or beforehand. There are advantages for the teacher, too, in that there is no better way of understanding what you are asking of students than trying to do the activity yourself. In this way, you can evaluate the design of the activities you set and learn a good deal about yourself as a writer and the challenges of the writing process.

Assumption 10

Teachers should write with and for their students.

All of the preceding ten assumptions underlie the writing activities in this book. In setting them out here my intention is to raise a number of points which will be taken up and further explored and exemplified in the relevant chapters.

Evaluating writing activities

The framework set out above as ten assumptions about writing can provide the teacher with an approach to evaluating any writing activity that might be used in the classroom. Activities can come from two major sources. Many teachers like to experiment with producing their own materials for their classes. It is an enjoyable and creative aspect of teaching and, sometimes, in the absence of appropriate published materials, a necessary task. In this situation, we need criteria for evaluating whether a task is likely to provide effective learning material for the students we have in mind.

It is also true that in the published materials we use in our classrooms writing activities can be scarce or of varying usefulness and quality. Teachers need ways of assessing their potential and predicting their effectiveness. We need to ask questions such as:

- Does this material encourage good strategies in writing, or do we need to add steps to encourage planning, revision etc?
- What aim does this activity have? Does it focus on a useful aspect of writing, for example, paragraphing, developing sentence structure, connectives of addition?

The questionnaire that follows is designed to raise some of the key questions we need to ask and answer in the evaluation of a writing activity. It has five sections, each investigating an area of evaluation. These can be summarized as: aims, approach, motivation, task design, and task adaptation. Each section has been elaborated into a set of questions which can be applied to any writing activity. The questionnaire might form a useful group activity at a teachers' meeting. Hopefully it will give you ideas for evaluating your own or other materials and serve as a checklist of points for consideration in the design of motivating and effective writing activities.

Evaluating writing activities: a questionnaire

Aims

1 Does the activity practise a particular text type with clear functional organization, for example, narrative, contrast/comparison, instructional information?
2 What form does the written work take, for example, letter, postcard, composition? Is this form relevant and/or motivating for students?
3 Which particular writing skills are in focus, for example, logical development of ideas, use of cohesive devices?

Approach

4 Does the activity focus on process, for example, planning, drafting, revising?
5 Does the activity focus on text, for example, how the text is organized or how component parts are put together?
6 Are students encouraged to follow model texts? To what extent is this useful, constraining, etc?
7 Are students given opportunities to use their own ideas and their own language resources in creating texts?

Motivation

8 Does the material involve students, allowing them to exploit personal knowledge and experience?
9 How does the content of the activity motivate, for example, through relating to other curriculum subjects, widening cultural horizons, using topics of universal interest, topicality etc?

10 Does the methodology of the activity motivate, for example, through problem-solving, bridging an information or opinion gap?

Task design

11 Has the context of the writing been made clear, for example, a guidebook, a letter to a newspaper editor?
12 Has the audience of the writing been made clear, for example, another student, an organization, the school?
13 What is the degree of support and guidance given in
   —content
   —language
   —textual organization
   and is this appropriate, too little or too much?
14 What kind of classroom interactions are involved, for example, individual work, pair work, class work? What are the reasons for the interactions and are they appropriate or could they be varied or improved?
15 Is the activity carefully broken down into steps for students to follow? If not, how can you add to or improve the instructions?
16 Are the instructions clear and concise?

Task adaptation

17 Is there anything missing from the design? Can you see any problems with the activity? Check back with your answers to earlier questions.
18 How could you adapt the activity for effective use with your own students?

How to use this book

How the book is organized

This book has been structured to reflect the stages of the writing process itself.

1 Communicating

The focus in this chapter is on one aspect of composing: the need to develop a strong sense of audience. The activities demonstrate ways in which the teacher can create contexts for classroom writing and provide a range of readers. It has a second goal of showing students how the style of writing differs according to the purpose of the writing and the particular audience in view.

2 Composing

This chapter discusses the pre-writing and drafting stages when writers get their ideas together, make rough plans or formulate mental outlines, and develop a sense of direction as they begin to draft their writing. The activities present a range of techniques for encouraging good pre-writing and drafting strategies in the process of composing.

3 Crafting

Here we look at the skills a writer needs to produce coherent and appropriate texts. The activities suggest ways in which teachers can help learners to develop paragraphs coherently, use cohesive devices, use a range of sentence structures, and develop a range of appropriate vocabulary.

4 Improving

Discussion in this chapter centres on the ways in which teachers and learners can work together to improve the clarity and quality of writing. It includes ideas for involving students in the activities of reviewing work, revising it, and then editing the final draft.

The outcome of this type of organization is that there is a discrete focus in the activities in each chapter on the topic of that chapter. For example, in Chapter 2, 'Composing', there is an activity that demonstrates in detail the strategy of brainstorming. Brainstorming may then be mentioned in activities in Chapter 3, 'Crafting', but will not be repeatedly described in detail. Chapter 4, 'Improving',

describes strategies such as group writing or pair work editing which can be applied to any of the writing activities described in the book. In this way it is possible to highlight each stage in the writing process and present a range of strategies without undue repetition.

A resource book is not meant to be read from beginning to end, but is something to be dipped into. However, given the underlying rationale for the organization of the book, it would be useful to skim through the various chapters to gain an overall impression so that you can combine and integrate the resources.

I hope that you will be able to explore several possibilities in exploiting this set of resources, for example:

- In some of the activities, for example, Activity 3.1 'Describing a person', it is possible to predict the language that learners will need—in this case, the present simple of verbs such as *like* and *work* and *wear*, adjectives describing people, and adjectival phrases. Such activities can be developed and adapted to form the end point in an integrated skills approach to the teaching of certain language items.
- Many of the activities can be used for more open-ended fluency activities, giving learners the opportunity to use all the language resources they have acquired, after preliminary discussion of ideas and content, and with no particular focus on specific language items.
- If the strategies presented in Chapter 4, 'Improving', such as conferencing and peer conferencing using checklists, are used, students can then become involved in accuracy work which is comparatively spontaneous and certainly more meaningful and motivating than highly controlled writing exercises of a more traditional type.

In that the activities present a range of techniques and strategies which can be applied in a variety of ways, they are not sequenced. As you browse through the book you can select according to your teaching situation and the particular needs of your learners. Each activity is assigned to a level but, as you try out the suggestions, you will be able to adapt activities to a range of levels. The particular example chosen to illustrate the technique has a content which is appropriate to the given level, but I hope that you will be able to develop content suitable for your own types, ages, and levels of students.

How each activity is organized

The organization of each activity follows a similar pattern, and you will find some or all of the following headings used to give relevant information about the activity: level, time, aims, topic, preparation, procedure, comments, and variations.

Level

This is generally an indication of the minimum level at which the activity can be successfully attempted by students. Sometimes the

language required by a certain activity can be adapted upwards or downwards to suit a particular group, and in this case a range of levels is given. In other cases, I hope you will be able to take an idea and find suitable content for other levels of students.

Time

The timing of activities in the classroom is always, to some extent, unpredictable. It will depend on many factors: the students' response to a particular activity; the degree of teacher control over the progress of the activity; the pace at which individuals, pairs, or groups proceed with the activity; whether students are writing by hand or word processing. Timing is further complicated in this book because many of the activities cover only part of the whole writing process. For example, 2.1 'Making mind maps' and 2.4 'Brainstorming' cover only the initial activities in the process of composition. The timing given, therefore, is sometimes a minimum, with a plus symbol (+) used to indicate that more time is needed for the rest of the activity, which may take place in or out of class.

Preparation

This refers to anything you need to do or think about before you go into the classroom.

Procedure

This shows, in numbered steps, how to carry out the activity in class.

Comments

These may be introductory, and placed at the beginning of the activity, in which case they are about goals or about how this activity relates to other activities. The comments given at the end of an activity may give advice about classroom exploitation, compare possible advantages and disadvantages of the procedure, suggest sources of further ideas, or cross-refer to other parts of the book.

You will also find comments on the topic of an activity, where this is appropriate. Sometimes the topic is not mentioned as the activity is more of a technique which can be generalized across different topics. Always check the activity because you may find that the content is flexible and you can transfer the ideas very quickly to another content area.

Variations

These could be ideas on how to change the activity for different types of classes, different levels, or alternative ways of delivering the activities.

1

Communicating

Introduction

Writing in real life is usually undertaken in response to a demand of some kind. For adults, that demand may arise from academic studies or professional responsibilities, or from social roles such as friend, enquirer, complainant, purchaser, or counsellor. Students may have any or all of these present or future purposes for writing in English. But in every case there is a real audience to whom a message must be clearly communicated.

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. In his article, 'The daily record', Jerre Paquette reports the comments of fifteen-year-old Robert on the impersonality of classroom writing in general:

> In school we write ... not to anyone ... we just give information.
> Not to someone ... we just write information down on paper.

It is far more motivating, and ultimately more useful, if secondary and adult English-language students can write within a context, and with an audience in mind so that it is possible to select appropriate content, organize it in a suitable way, and express it in an appropriate style. This means that an essential principle for the teacher is to contextualize writing tasks. For example, if the task is for students to write a description of their home town, they need to know who they are writing it for (for example, a pen-friend) and for what purpose (for example, to give some key information to someone who doesn't know the town but is shortly coming to visit). The student can then select what is most relevant for the pen-friend to know about, can begin with what is most interesting, and can write it in an appropriately informal style. In this way, students need to be able to imagine their readers and motivate themselves to write for them. It is even more motivating for them if their writing can sometimes become genuine pieces of communication to real audiences such as other students, visitors, the local English-language newspaper, English-speaking organizations, etc. Then they can think carefully about the identifiable and particular context which will determine the exact message and style of their written communication.

The need for contextualization places responsibilities on the teacher. Consider the following questions:

1 What writing tasks (whole paragraphs or texts) have you set for your students over the last few weeks?
2 When you set the tasks, did you have clear in your own mind what you expected from your students in terms of such features as: level of formality; emotive tone; use of colloquial expressions; use of contracted forms; amount of knowledge assumed in the reader; or degree of explicit information in discursive writing?
3 What instructions or examples did you give your students to enable them to meet your expectations?
4 Did you set the writing task in a clear context and provide an audience?

Look, for example, at these three texts, which are all descriptions of people. It is easy to tell, from the selection of content, the style, etc., what the source of each text is. Each would be found in a certain context: a description of a historical figure in an encyclopaedia; an impression of a character in a novel; or a sketch of a new friend in a letter.

Kathy Clarke was one of the hardest working girls in Mountainview. She frowned with concentration in class, she puzzled things out, she hung back and asked questions. In the staffroom they often made good-natured fun of her. 'Doing a Kathy Clarke' meant screwing up your eyes at a notice on the bulletin board trying to understand it.

She was a tall, awkward girl, her navy school skirt a bit too long, none of the pierced ears and cheap jewellery of her classmates. Not really bright but determined to do well. Almost too determined. Every year they had parent–teacher meetings. Nobody could really remember who came to ask about Kathy.

From: *Evening Class* by Maeve Binchy

The enlightened one

Gautama Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, rejected his princely lifestyle, found enlightenment, and through his teaching inspired one of the world's great religions.

The Buddha is the title by which Gautama Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, was known after experiencing enlightenment at the age of 35.

Gautama lived in north-east India from about 563 to 483 BC. He was the son of a wealthy, elected aristocratic ruler. At 29 he turned his back on his birthright to become a wanderer, living by alms and seeking a way to lasting happiness.

Some of those inspired by the Buddha's teachings became monks. When he had gathered 60 enlightened monks, he sent them out to teach others. In time, he had more than 2500 fully enlightened disciples and several thousand lay disciples.

From: *The Reader's Digest Family Encyclopedia of World History*

> He's enormously tall—nearly two metres—and thin. I tell him he looks like a spider. He laughs a lot and his eyebrows go up and down. He always thinks the best of people and is probably the warmest-hearted person I know. I think I'm falling in love with him!

These examples should serve to demonstrate how difficult it would be for a student to write on the same topic without a context: appropriateness of content, organization, and style become impossible.

Helping student writers to become aware of their readers and develop a sense of audience is an important task for the teacher, especially with secondary school learners who may not have developed a strong sense of audience in their first-language writing. Many adults, too, are not skilled at writing in their first language and do not have a sense of audience to transfer to writing in English.

Interesting research has been undertaken on this issue for the teacher. In an article in *College Composition and Communication*, Flower and Hayes, investigating the differences between skilled and less skilled writers, found that skilled writers take time to ensure that what they want to express is said in a way that is clear and comprehensible to their readers. They think about what their reader will be interested in or needs to know by way of background information. Less skilled writers often assume that there is no need to do this and that their readers will have no problems. They tend to produce 'writer-based' rather than 'reader-based' prose which focuses on the topic at the expense of the reader and does not guide the reader, with clear signposting, through the developing text.

In the English-speaking world, it is seen as important to have a sense of audience. If there is misunderstanding between writer and reader, it is usually the writer who is seen as responsible for the breakdown in communication. Students, then, need encouragement from the teacher about appropriateness in writing as well as correctness.

For every piece of writing a student needs to start by asking and answering these questions:

1 Who is my reader?
2 Why exactly am I writing this? To protest about poor service? To persuade a language school to accept me as a student? To demonstrate to a tutor that I have understood this topic?
3 What effect do I want to have on my reader? Do I want to change their opinions radically on this topic? Do I want to convince them to do something for me?
4 What kind of relationship do I want to establish with my reader? Do I want to present myself as an expert? Do I want to be friendly?
5 What do I need to say?
6 How can I make it clear and accessible to my reader?
7 What kind of style would be appropriate? To my reader? To my purpose in writing?

It is a sense of audience that facilitates communication. This principle has received strong focus in educational writing, where the student is writing for tutors who represent the academic community.

In this situation there are certain expectations in the audience with regard to shared assumptions, writing conventions, acceptable discourse organization, and so on. However, key issues for all teachers of writing in English become:

- how to help students become aware that a sense of audience is required in English writing and that different styles suit different purposes and audiences
- how to motivate students and provide incentives for clear writing by contextualizing tasks or by creating real audiences wherever possible.

Some activities in this chapter encourage students to think about appropriate style, particularly formal/informal, polite/less polite, objective/emotive. Others focus on motivating students by creating audiences, real or imaginary. It is not easy to formulate meaningful writing tasks which will be read by someone other than the teacher. But one solution is for the teacher to become an audience in a writer-reader relationship involving response rather than assessment. Here the teacher is a more personal audience as a reader of student journals or as a correspondent in an exchange of letters.

There is always another possible audience for classroom writing apart from the teacher, and that is the other students in the class. Students can be encouraged to share their writing with fellow students, by working in pairs or groups or showing a plan or a first draft for comment as part of the revision process (see Chapter 4, 'Improving'). Sharing can help writers in that they receive questions and comments on their intentions and on the organization and clarity of their writing. It is not uncommon in coursebooks these days to find instructions of this type:

Write your opinion about a social problem in your town. Exchange your draft with a partner. Does he or she agree?

Choose a topic you feel strongly about, e.g. testing cosmetics on animals or banning smoking in public places. Write your opinions and show them to your group. Do they agree with you?

However, care is needed in setting up such activities and their gradual introduction is advisable, with the teacher explaining their goals and advantages carefully. This is particularly important with less mature or less confident writers, who may not have experienced any kind of classroom collaborative work previously. As Donald Graves puts it in his book *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work*, the audience 'can intrude too early on a first draft' or sometimes 'the audience simply says too much.' He describes the experience of Trevor, a young writer, when he first shared a draft with his five-person writing group. They questioned and commented so much that Trevor dismissed it all and left the group muttering: 'To hell with all of them. I'll do it my own way.' An alternative form of collaborative work can be formally structured by asking students to write different parts of a text within a group and then to make a coherent whole of the individual pieces through discussion and rewriting.

Class members can become an audience in another way, by using the principle of task dependency. This involves setting up a sequence of activities in which student A, Pierre, writes a text for student B, Monique, who has to use it in some way to perform a task. The success of Monique's task depends on her understanding of Pierre's writing and her ability to use the information in it. She can question and ask for clarification. In this way Pierre has a real reader, someone who has to understand and use his writing: he becomes accountable in the way that writers are in real life, and this accountability has a strong motivating force for clear and effective writing.

Sometimes it is possible for students to write for real audiences, depending on the English language available in their environment, for example:

—letters of enquiry to organizations
—letters to the editor of an English language newspaper or magazine for publication
—letters of invitation and thanks to English-speaking guest speakers
—stories for children who are learning English in an accessible school
—information leaflets for students in the school or newcomers to the school
—magazines for publication within the school
—projects for display within the school
—papers and articles for exchange within a group
—scripts for recording or performance within the school

The tasks that follow give ideas for some of these audiences.

Students can always be encouraged to write for themselves, for example, to practise writing by keeping a diary, writing reviews of books they read or films they see in English, and perhaps sometimes sharing these with friends.

Finally, where students and teachers are fortunate enough to have access to the Internet, there are valuable opportunities for communicating with real audiences. The teacher can set up a list of email addresses and encourage students to send each other email, as in Activity 1.11, 'Internet greetings'. Exchanges of letters between students, as in Activity 1.7, 'Giving directions', can be done by email as well. Use of Internet resources, with school students, would clearly need to be done with care and with parental permission but there are opportunities here for introducing students to discussion lists and newsgroups. For further information, please see another book in this series *The Internet* by Windeatt, Hardisty, and Eastment.

1.1 Exchanging letters with your students

Level Elementary to advanced

Time 10 minutes for introduction in class

Aims To provide an opportunity to write more extensively to the teacher as participator in real communication.

In *Writing, Maths and Games in the Open Classroom*, Herbert Kohl describes using the technique of writing letters to his fourth grade and fifth grade students, who were mostly bilingual Puerto Ricans learning to write in English. He became a correspondent rather than an evaluator, as he did not correct their letters. But he found that his role as 'language informant' became important, as the students borrowed language from his letters to use in their own. One suggested procedure for using the technique is described below.

Preparation

Prepare a letter introducing yourself to your students. Tell them a little about yourself, your job, your home, etc.

I prepared the letter below for a class of Japanese undergraduates who were following a writing course before starting a year's study at a British university. My intention was to encourage them to practise writing more extensively outside class and motivate them to do this for a real audience. A student's response is also included below (the name has been changed).

Dear Miyuki

I am writing to introduce myself and to invite you to practise your writing in English by corresponding with me. I think the best way to improve writing is to write as much as possible and that could mean writing all kinds of things - diaries, journals about your studies, accounts of visits, as well as writing assignments in class. I would be happy to read your letters and give you advice about your writing. You could write about anything you wish.

In this first letter I'll tell you a little bit about myself and perhaps you could do the same. My name is Tricia. Very recently I flew back to England from Tokyo and I miss Japan very much. I was teaching Japanese teachers of English and it was a very good experience. I found Japanese people friendly and hospitable. Tokyo was crowded and busy but somehow I didn't feel as stressed as in London, where I lived before. Perhaps the winter sunshine helped! My last weekend was in Nikko and I thought it was just so beautiful.

Please write to me and tell me about yourself. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes

Tricia

Dear Tricia

I will tell you something about myself. My name is Miyuki. Everyone calls me Yuki. I was born in Kyoto. I am a little too nervous. Moreover I am shy. The trouble is that I am easily moved by other's opinions. I want to be a person of stronger character. However, I am said to be a kind and honest girl. I think myself that I am soft on the surface but tough enough at the core. But I am very careless and sometimes make an awful behaviour.

Let me tell you about my hobbies. I particularly like reading English literature. Novels open up a new world to me. I can enter the minds of other people and become a different person myself.

At present I feel homesick for my family. I am weeping every day. I cannot stop shedding tears. But studying in English is the way I decided by myself. So I must brace myself up. Cheer up, Miyuki!

Thank you very much for your letter. I am looking forward to hearing from you again.

Miyuki

Procedure

1 Suggest that students write the same to you in a letter. On an intensive course, you could suggest that they write back for the next day; on a weekly evening course, for the next week, and so on.

2 When a student writes to you, reply with another letter responding to opinions and ideas, using your letter to communicate on an adult-to-adult basis, rather than as teacher to student.

3 Always treat the letters as a private activity and do not bring them into general classroom discussion. You should not feel obliged to correct them, either. Explain this point of view to students. In fact, students gain language advantages in other ways. Firstly, they get plenty of practice in trying to express themselves in writing, and also gain motivation to make themselves understood. Secondly, your letters provide them with vocabulary, useful grammatical structures, and idiomatic expressions, all of which are useful models of language.

Comments

I read about this idea in an article by Mario Rinvolucri in *ELT Journal* called 'Writing to your students'. He reports on an experiment he set up with six Western European students aged 30–40 on a two-week intensive course, as valuable and exciting, not least because it obliged him to 'spend an hour or more each day thinking about students as individuals, both humanly and linguistically'. This comes through very clearly in the letter above, which I received from a student (the name has been changed) in response to my letter. You should be aware that such letters can lead to a need for support and pastoral care.

The amount of writing you do, and its frequency, needs to be worked out realistically, in accordance with the size of your class. Using a word processor and keeping some content similar across a range of letters during a course can ease the task of dealing with larger numbers of students.

1.2 Sharing journals with students

Level Elementary to advanced

Time 10 minutes at the beginning of each lesson

Aims To provide an opportunity to exchange ideas, reflections, and opinions with the teacher as participator.

The idea of using a writing journal, or a book for writing within English lessons is one many teachers have tried. Like the idea of exchanging letters, described in Activity 1.1, it is a device which provides opportunities for writing practice. The main difference is that time for writing is built into the lesson, and all students are encouraged to write for ten minutes or so.

In his article 'The daily record', a Canadian teacher, Jerre Paquette, outlines the way he has used journals and found them effective with 15- to 16-year-old first-language writers, though he reports on their successful use with students aged twelve to sixty. Both principles and procedures, with modifications to suit particular groups, transfer well to adult learners of English. Steps 1–5 below are adapted from his work.

Procedure

1 Provide each student with a booklet that is to be considered their personal property, with the caveat that it is an essential part of their course and therefore to be made accessible to the teacher but not other students.

2 Tell students that the booklets remain in a specially designated place in the classroom and may be taken home only after discussion with you until the end of the course or term, whereupon students can take them away.

3 Students should write in the booklets, on any subject in any style, each day at the beginning of the class for ten minutes only. You can extend this time occasionally, as the situation demands or permits. A good writer can usually write a whole page in ten minutes.

4 Tell students the writing will not be evaluated or marked.

5 Respond to the entries made by students in their journals, thus creating a dialogue-in-writing record and process between you and your students (or a partner acceptable to both students and you).

Comments

The writing in this activity moves away from writing as an 'assignment' or 'task' towards writing as a more natural exchange of reflections, reactions, and opinions. The teacher becomes a participant and the student initiates the exchange. A journal, in this sense, is a form of communication between two people on topics of their own choice. It becomes a means of experimenting with language.

If you wish to pursue this topic, you may be interested in an account given by Watson Todd et al. (2001) of students' preferences for the ways in which their teachers might respond to journals.

Variation

The procedure described above is for journals kept as part of classroom writing. Students can also be encouraged to write journals at home, with the incentive of getting some feedback on the language from the teacher's response to notes and queries. This activity would be more in the nature of a writer's diary. A set of guidelines for your students can be prepared as below.

Keeping a writer's diary

Many people who have learnt to write effectively in a foreign language say that they learnt to write by writing something every day. A diary can be a general account of your daily activities or it can focus on a particular part of your life, for example, your experiences in learning English. Here are some suggestions for a diary:

Content

- Write about people you see or meet. Say what you find interesting about them or what you like and dislike.
- Write about places you visit. Collect some written souvenirs to paste in your diary, e.g. brochures, tickets, postcards, and write something about them. Take photographs, paste them in, and write about them.
- Choose a particular topic which has come up during the day and write your feelings or opinions about it.

Here are some topics to choose from for your first diary entry:
—something that made you happy/angry/sad today
—some interesting information that made you think
—a topic you reflected on, for example, your future studies or work, a friendship, an event in your country
—a problem you need to confront
—something you like in your own culture and why.

Language

Don't worry about being accurate at first. Just write down your ideas. Then go back and try to improve your writing. Make notes about anything you are unsure of, in the margin or at the end. Share your diary with your teacher, who will respond to your questions.

It's up to you to decide how much you want to use your diary for language practice, but here are two things you could do.

—if you have learnt a new grammar point in class, try to use it. For example, if you have learnt the future with *will*, write about what you think you will do tomorrow or next week.

—if you keep a vocabulary notebook, try to use some of the vocabulary you have learnt. For example, if you have been learning adjectives to describe people, try to describe someone you have met.

Note

Keep your diary in a ring binder with loose pages and start each entry on a new page. Then you can easily take out things you want to share.

Photocopiable © Oxford University Press

1.3 Keeping a reading journal

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 40–50 minutes for introduction in class

Aims To provide writing practice integrated with reading.

Preparation

You will need photocopies of the guidelines below, designed for upper-intermediate students in the UK, or an adapted version of them. They could be adapted for language level or content. For example, you might suggest just one or two of the three entry types.

Once you have used this activity, it can be useful to collect examples of journals to show students.

For homework, ask each student to find an interesting text and prepare a few sentences to say about it. Suggest some sources, for example, English language newspapers, magazines, textbooks, the library, greetings cards, brochures, the Internet.

Find an interesting text yourself, preferably with features such as title, headline, picture. Prepare to say a little about it. If you can, make an OHT of it.

Procedure

1 Tell the students that you read an interesting article, story etc. yesterday and say why it was interesting. Point out a title, headline, picture etc. on the OHT as you do so.

2 Choose some students to tell the class why they found their text interesting and afterwards pick out useful language they used/could have used.

Examples It's a human interest story which appealed to me.
one-sided, prejudiced argument.
social problem we all need to think about.

It reminds me of something that happened to me.
made me think about …
made me angry/sad because…

I tried to imagine…
I thought about how…

3 Ask students to work in groups of four, show their texts, and tell each other about them. Monitor the class as they work, providing language where needed and noting some interesting texts.

4 Choose the students with the interesting texts you've noted and ask them to talk about their texts and develop the language on the board.

5 Talk to students about the value of keeping a reading journal for writing development (and, of course, for reading development). Give out photocopies of the guidelines and go through the main points with students. Discuss sources of texts and elicit their ideas for them. Set a date for handing in their first entry.

Comments

I have found that some students like to use their reading journals to learn vocabulary and that they will make their own vocabulary lists or enter words into their vocabulary notebooks. It is useful to encourage them to use some of the words in their journal entries.

Keeping a reading journal

1 Decide what you want your journal to look like, for example, a spiral-bound notebook or a ring binder with loose leaves. It needs to be a thickness of paper on which you can paste texts. Start each entry on a new page and write on one side of the paper. If you want your teacher to write notes directly on the page, leave a wide enough margin.

2 Choose one or two texts every week. Talk to your friends and your teacher about possible sources of texts. These may be English language newspapers or magazines in your country, brochures in English institutions, or books in libraries. You could look on the Internet or even choose a text from an English coursebook. Paste the text in your journal or put it in a plastic pocket.

3 Choose what kind of entry you want to write. Here are three ideas:
- **Resume** Write a paragraph which summarizes the content of the text.
- **Respond** Write a response of some kind to what you have read. If your text is a newspaper article you could write your response in the form of a letter to the editor. Here are some prompts to help you with your response:
  —What did you learn of interest from the text?
  —Did you agree or disagree with anything?
  —Did you like what you read?
  —Did you like the style of the writer?
  —Was there something in the text of personal meaning to you?
- **Reflect** Write some reflections on how you managed to deal with the text, for example:
  —What did you look at first? A picture? A headline?
  —How long did it take you to read and understand the text?
  —How many times did you read the text or parts of the text?
  —Was there anything particularly difficult about this text?
  —Did you have to look up some vocabulary? Could you guess the meanings of some new words?
  —Have you read about this topic in your first language?

I will take in your journal occasionally to review it. If you want to ask any questions about your writing, remember to put them at the end of your entry.

1.4 Sharing cultural information

Level Intermediate

Time 40–50 minutes

Aims To use cultural information as a prompt for sharing writing.

Preparation

Prepare some examples of superstitions. Select these according to the background of your students. They could be from Britain or from a variety of countries you know. It is useful to have some which are the same and some which are different from those your students will know. Here are some common British superstitions.

Examples

1 Break a mirror and you will have seven years of bad luck.

2 It is unlucky to walk under a ladder.

3 A horseshoe on your front door will bring good luck.

4 Friday 13th is an unlucky day.

5 It is bad luck for the bridegroom to see the bride in her wedding dress before the wedding.

6 A bride should wear something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue to be sure of good luck.

7 Throw a coin in a fountain and it will bring you good luck.

8 If a black cat walks across your path you will have good luck.

9 If the first person to enter your house after the New Year has dark hair, you will have good luck.

10 Make a secret wish when you cut your birthday cake and it will come true.

Write your examples on the board, a handout, or an OHT.

Procedure

1 Write the word *superstition* on the board and ask students if they can tell you the meaning or ask them to check the meaning in a dictionary and give you an example. Alternatively, give them a well-known example such as item 4 above and ask them whether it is common in their own culture.

2 Show students the list you have made and ask them to read it. Answer questions to clarify anything they are unsure of.

3 Ask students to discuss in pairs or small groups which of the superstitions relate to their own culture and the ways in which they are similar or different.

4 Ask students to continue working in pairs or groups and make a list of superstitions in their own culture.

5 Display the lists in a wall display. The examples below come from a multicultural group of students studying in the UK.

> If your hands are itching, you will be rich.
>
> In Iran and in Spain, number 13 brings bad luck.
>
> In Iran, if the owl sings, people believe it brings bad luck.
>
> In Poland, it brings bad luck when you break a mirror, especially for love.
>
> In England, saying 'white rabbits' on the first day of every month is lucky.
>
> Tara, Victoria, Akhtar

Comments

Students are normally very interested in cultural information and their natural curiosity will motivate exchange in groups. Other useful cultural topics relate to festivals or family events such as weddings.

1.5 Making a class magazine

Level Elementary to advanced

Time One lesson of 40–50 minutes a week throughout the project

Aims To encourage responsibility and autonomy in self-selected extensive writing.

This activity is particularly suitable for learners in full-time study who are able to devote an hour or a lesson every week to the project. A project can be described as an extended task involving integrated skills work in which writing of a more extensive nature can take place. The great advantage of writing in project work is that, once the teacher has provided a framework and set the task in motion, students can take over, set their own targets, plan their writing, organize themselves into groups, and work at their own pace. The teacher's role is to advise, assist, monitor, and maintain motivation. The project described below was undertaken by lower-intermediate students, but could be adapted to any level from elementary to advanced. Further ideas for projects can be found in another book in this series, *Project Work*, by Diana Fried-Booth.

Making a class magazine gives students the opportunity for writing of many different kinds, such as reports, stories, reviews, poetry, etc. It also provides an audience—the class itself or the school. The stages necessary for project-work writing to be successful are given below.

Procedure

1 **Planning** This is probably best undertaken with you as editor, leading a discussion on the overall format of the magazine and inviting ideas and suggestions for content. Decisions also have to be made on such issues as length, theme, number of sections, etc.

2 **Fieldwork** Assign the work to smaller groups, each group allotting tasks to its members. Fieldwork might involve a wide variety of activities inside and outside the classroom, for example, library research on a topic, interviewing, doing a survey, writing away for information, reading something in order to write a review, etc.

3 **Writing** When students complete their fieldwork, they should begin writing (in pairs, groups, or as individuals), calling on you for help and advice. You should strongly encourage students to make revisions before you look at final drafts.

4 **Editing** All the students should have the opportunity to see the completed work displayed, for example, across the desks. Let them browse for part of a lesson. They should make general suggestions about the layout of the final product. If the end product is one large magazine (with articles pasted onto card and the card folded to make a 'jumbo book'), then each group can organize its own pages. Otherwise you and the students can elect an editorial panel to produce the final edition for photocopying.

5 **Publication** If the magazine is available through photocopies or display in the classroom, readers from the wider community in the school can be invited to write letters to the editor, commenting on articles, etc.

The examples below, produced by elementary students, are taken from one class magazine produced in six two-hour lessons, one each week, over half a term.

Ourselves and our lives

My Sisters

I have three sisters. They are Mary, Olga and Eva. Mary is twenty years old. She works in a factory. She has a boyfriend. His name is Juanjo. She has brown eyes and straight hair. She smokes and lives in Barcelona with my parents.

Olga is sixteen years old. She goes to school. She hasn't got a boyfriend.

Eva is thirteen years old. She goes to school. She has blond hair and brown eyes.

All of them are good sisters to me.

London

London is a great city! I live here now!

It's so big, you can see many different people. They come from many different countries. The people leave their countries because life there is not so good and they come here to have a better life.

The weather here is not very good because the English weather changes so often.

In the city of London you can see many big parks, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben, and the Tower of London.

Life in London is very busy. The day begins early. I like shopping in Oxford Street. You can buy anything.

The best here is the music. There is a big market for records in this country and I like it.

1.6 Carrying out mini-projects

Level Elementary to advanced

Time Variable; one lesson per week of 40–50 minutes or daily sessions of 40–50 minutes on an intensive course

Aims To provide a project framework for generating topics for writing.

This activity is set out as an example. Rather than general steps, it will give the precise procedure that was carried out for a large-scale project within which individual students selected mini-projects. Writing was the natural outcome of many of these mini-projects, as you will see in the examples given.

The project work was set into the context of a syllabus for summer school learners in an immersion situation. The learners constituted a predominantly monolingual group (German), ranging from elementary to advanced. They worked together on the projects, forming a supportive learning group. There were only eight learners in the group, so the teacher was able to give a good deal of individual help with planning, drafting, revising, etc.

The project revolved around a new shopping centre which had recently been built in the middle of the town where they were staying.

Preparation

The teacher began the project work with some orientation tasks which sent students around a shopping centre to get their bearings and discover what it contained. Each student was given a map of the local area, a blank layout of the shopping centre, and a set of instructions for his or her task. Each set of instructions was different, requiring each student to research a different aspect.

Here are two sample orientation tasks:

Basic instructions

You have been given a map of Ealing.

You are staying either at 6 Delamere Road or at 32 Bernard Avenue.

Both addresses are marked in red.

1 Find the street where you are staying.

2 After your arrival, visit the local shopping centre 'Ealing Broadway Centre'. This is the third plce which is marked in red on your map.

You have also been given a layout plan of the shopping centre.

Take it with you, also a pen and paper.

If possible go with someone else who has also just arrived.

Basic instructions (variation)

1 In the shopping centre locate:

a Barclays Bank

b the chemist's called 'Superdrug'

c the sculpture of a horse.

Mark their position on the blank layout plan of Ealing Broadway Centre.

2 At Barclays Bank find out and write down

—the opening times of the bank

—the exchange rate of Euros to US dollars.

3 Find Ealing Broadway Station.

4 Tick (✓) the means of transport you can use from there.
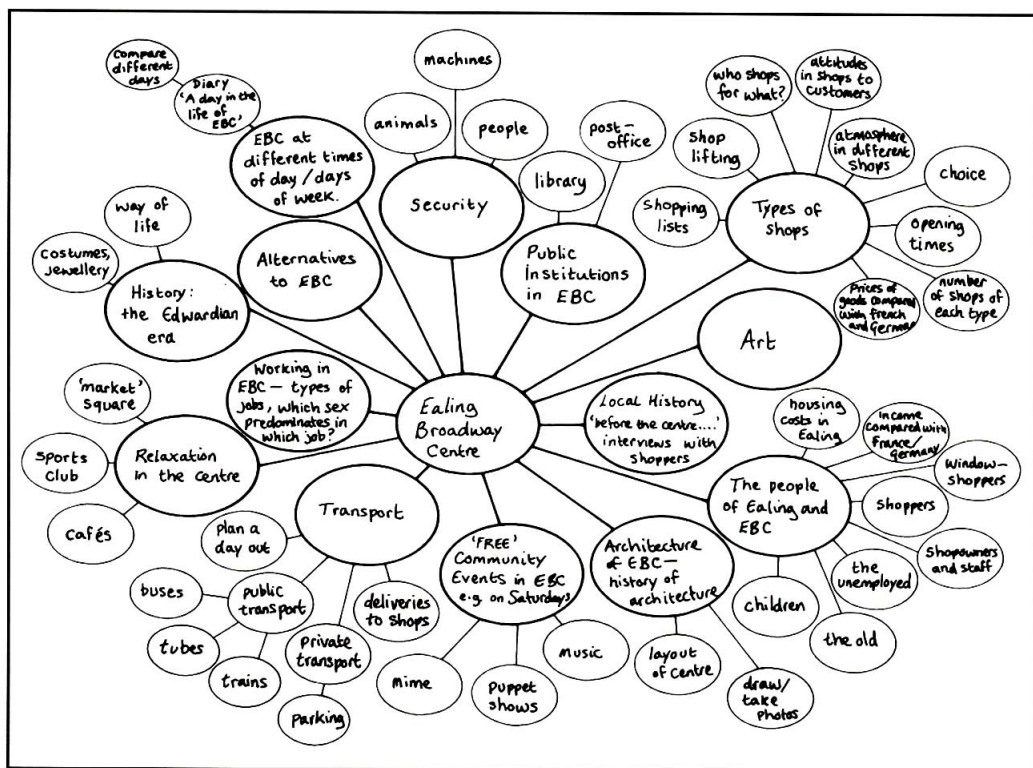
Figure 1

Procedure

1 The first step in class was preparation for the project through feedback on the orientation task. This involved sharing information so that every student could fill in the overall plan of the shopping centre.

2 Students then brainstormed all the possible aspects for investigation and the teacher drew a mind map of the ideas (see Figure 1).

3 Students chose their weekly mini-project on an individual, pair-work, or group-work basis from the mind map.

4 The implementation stage took the students outside the classroom into the English-speaking environment for the purpose of information-gathering in connection with their chosen project. Pre-teaching in class involved an investigation of the structuring and cohesion of the various text types that students would be producing in their writing. Language items such as structures and vocabulary were given to students as they needed them in their drafting, rewriting, and editing.

5 During the collation stage, students processed their own notes and the information they had collected, for example, brochures and recordings of interviews with shoppers, residents, etc. They then embarked on their writing tasks. Peer teaching and peer correction played an important role before comment by the teacher.

6 The presentation stage came at the end of each week, when final versions were offered to the group, which acted as an audience for discussion, evaluation, and comment. Each student reported orally on his or her project, its problems, stages, and outcome.

7 The reflection stage came at the end of the course when each student was provided with a folder containing all the project work of the group from the complete course. Each student was thus assured of a real readership for the projects and was supplied with models of different text types to draw from in future writing.

Below are two examples of some of the work produced. Students were encouraged to write a variety of text types. Example A shows guidebook information for a sports centre, while Example B provides general information on the area.

Example A

> ## The Sport places in EBC
>
> For my mini project, this week, I am writing about the sports clubs in EBC.
>
> Are you looking for a place where you can relax, enjoy yourself and take care of your body?
>
> There is a fantastic club—easy to find called 'Stripes Squash and Health Club' in a quiet area of London.
>
> Here you can practise many sports like gymnastics, classic dance, keep fit exercises or squash.
>
> There are nearly 100 classes every week and each is directed by a Studio Manager Teacher. She advises you about the correct exercise programme to suit your needs. She has been teaching for 10 years.

Example B

> ## EALING
>
> ### What to do and what to see
>
> General Information
>
> Ealing is a large suburb in the west of London with 300,000 inhabitants. Besides Ealing is called 'Queen of the suburbs' because everywhere there are trees in the streets and there are big parks and a common.
>
> ### Parks
>
> There are three big parks in Ealing. The most important parks are Gunnersbury Park and Walpole Park. In Gunnersbury Park you can find a museum. There you can see a collection of objects from different centuries. But if you don't want to visit the museum you can do a number of sports. I will give more facts about sporting facilities there in the section about sports.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Ursula Hilton-Jones, who designed this project as part of course assessment for the Postgraduate Diploma in English Studies at Ealing College of Higher Education, and who piloted the materials with her summer school students.

1.7 Giving directions

Level Elementary to intermediate

Time 40–50 minutes

Aims To use the principle of task dependency to create an audience and the need for clear and coherent writing.

Preparation

Find a fairly large-scale, clear, readable street map of the local area for display on the wall or, if you have sufficient copies, for students to use in pairs.
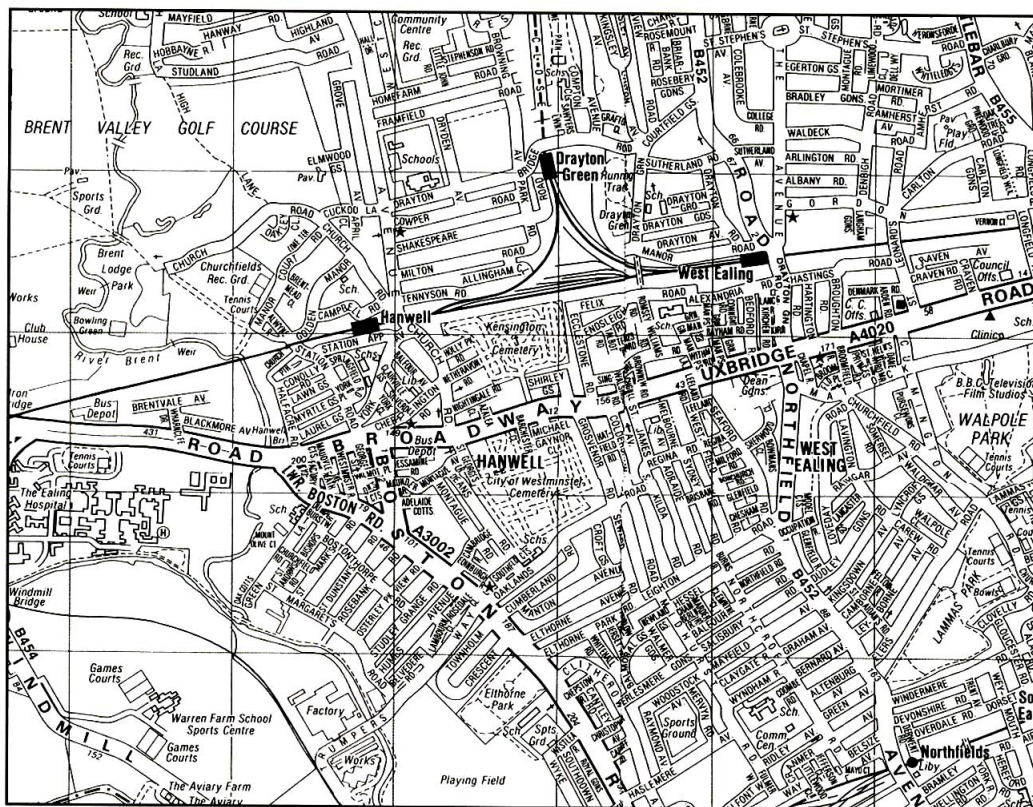
Procedure

1 Divide the students into pairs. Ask each student to locate a place on the street map which is his or her real or imagined home. The most important thing is that the student's partner should not have the information.

2 Ask one partner in each pair to write a letter to the other, sending a supper or party invitation which includes directions to his or her home. The home address should be written without the street or number.

3 The directions should begin with reference to a landmark which is clearly marked on the map, for example, *Get off the bus outside the Hotel Metropole* or *When you come out of the station …*

4 Then ask each student to give the letter to his or her partner to trace the directions on the street map and name the destination.

Comments

There is an element of task dependency in this activity, as the destination cannot be located without clear directions. The activity is particularly useful for students who have just arrived to study in a new town, as relevancy will increase their motivation. Below is an example of one student's work, based on the map above.

Example

Dear Meriam,

Would you like to come to supper with my family at home on Sunday about 7 o'clock? It would be very nice if you could come.

It isn't difficult to get to our house. If you get off the train at Hanwell Station, walk out of the station into Campbell Road and turn left. This will bring you to Golden Manor where you turn left again. You will see a very high railway bridge. Walk under it into Station Road and walk along Station Road until you come to Lawn Gardens on the left. Our house is number 83 on the right. There's a big cherry tree in our front garden.

I hope you can come.

Best wishes

Batool

1.8 Asking for and giving advice

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 40–50 minutes

Aims To create an incentive for writing by providing other students as an audience.

Almost a traditional activity in ELT classrooms, writing letters to an agony column can be modified into pair or group work in order to provide an audience for writing and a sequence of activities which work on the task-dependency principle.

Preparation

Collect some examples of letters to an agony column. In many Western countries, readers can send letters to magazines, newspapers, and websites relating their problems to so-called experts

I'd hate my family to say 'We told you so'

My family have always disliked my husband and thought I could do better. I recently had a miscarriage and he gave me no support at all but blamed me for losing the baby. He's very secretive, possessive, and sometimes very nasty. But I can't leave in case my family say, 'We told you so'.

You're not thinking straight. You have a family who want to help you and you're not letting them. They may not say 'We told you so', and, even if they do, it would be easier to tolerate than the awful behaviour of your husband, wouldn't it? Accept that you've learnt a hard lesson, get in touch with them, and start planning for a happier future.

He hasn't called

I'm 13 and recently went on holiday with my best friend. We got to know a couple of boys and I gave one of them my phone number. But I haven't heard from him since we got back and I feel so miserable. I keep crying and don't know what to do.

I'm sorry that you feel so miserable but crying isn't going to make the phone ring. You have been hurt and let down but that, I'm afraid, is what happens when you start getting involved with boys, especially when you're so young. Enjoy your holiday memories but don't let them stop you getting on with your life.

I can't get over what bullies did to me

Two years ago I worked in an office with two of the nastiest women I've ever met. They bullied me every day and blamed me for anything that went wrong. In the end I broke down in front of my doctor and was signed off with stress and depression. I've moved away since but I still wake up at night with nightmares about these bullies. How can I get them out of my mind?

It's time to say 'No more!' Don't let these bullies dominate your life. See a counsellor first. Then visit a solicitor and see if you can pursue a claim through a civil court. You may also find it helpful to do an assertiveness training course. It will help you feel better about yourself.

who publish replies. The problems range across a variety of personal, medical, domestic, marital, and professional problems. Some examples are shown above.

Procedure

1 Discuss with the class the concept of an agony column and their reactions to it. Examples like those above can be used with students to whom the cultural concept is unfamiliar or you may use them as a reading activity to warm up to the writing and provide models for the language.

2 Ask each student, pair, or group to think of a problem and formulate a letter to an agony column. This can be done individually by students, in pairs, or small groups.

3 When the students have completed the letters, they exchange them with another student, pair, or group whose task is to discuss possible answers and write a reply in the role of agony columnist.

4 The letters could then be published on a wall display or kept in a folder in the classroom for students to read.

1.9 Jigsaw story writing

Level Elementary to upper-intermediate

Time 40–50 minutes

Aims To use the principle of information gap to motivate group writing.

The use of picture stories to stimulate narrative writing in ELT is well established. This activity uses a picture story and the principle of the information gap to create task dependency. An information gap activity is basically one where a student or group of students holds information which is unknown to another student or group. This simulates real life where communication frequently involves the passing on of previously unknown information from one person to another. In this activity each student has only one picture from the sequence and students are required to share their knowledge in order to piece the story together.

Preparation

Prepare one or several copies (as many copies as there are groups in step 4 below) of the picture sequence of a horror story. The picture sequence should be cut up into individual pictures for distribution to individual students. For this example we will assume a group of fifteen students.

Procedure

1 Put your students into groups of three.

2 Give each group or individual in a group one of the pictures, so everyone in the group has the same picture to discuss and write about. The diagram below shows the arrangement of the groups.
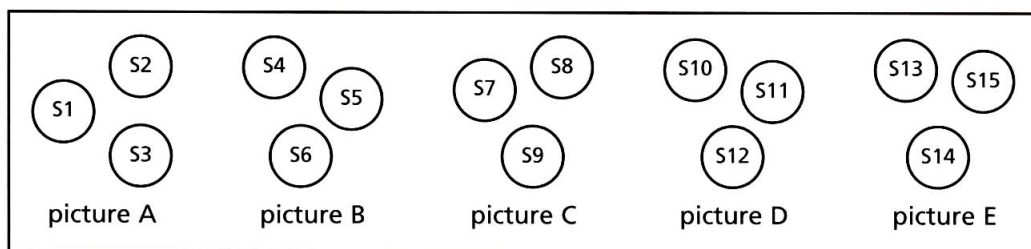
Figure 2

3 Working together within their group, students write a paragraph describing events in their picture. In order to ensure coherence, it is wise to suggest that everyone works in the past tense. When the paragraph is agreed and completed, each student writes down his or her own copy.

4 Collect the pictures. Then reorganize the class into groups of five, each student having a description of one picture/part of the story. The rearrangement can be shown diagrammatically as follows:
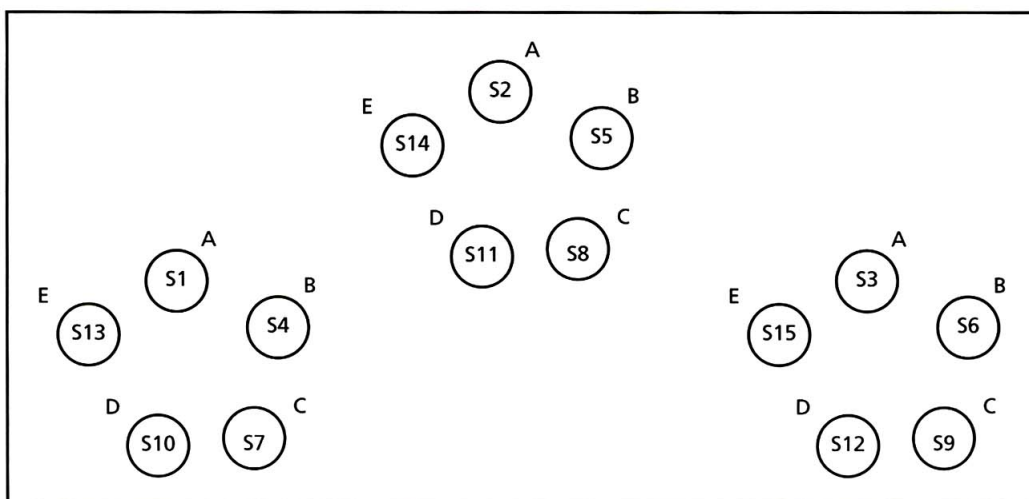
Figure 3

5 Ask the students to assemble the parts into a narrative, making necessary modifications to produce a logical story with appropriate cohesive devices, tense sequences, etc.

6 A final stage could be reading the completed versions aloud to compare and assess them. Below is an example of an appropriate picture sequence.

Example

1.10 Writing a newscast

Level Elementary to advanced

Time 1–2 lessons of 40–50 minutes, plus homework

Aims To give an opportunity for writing in order to perform for an audience of fellow students.

Preparation

1 You will need a recording of the news with several items of reasonable length.

2 Depending on the level of the group and the degree of guidance you think is necessary or desirable, you will also need one of the following:
   —a set of newspaper headlines
   —items from the 'news in brief' section of a paper
   —a set of short newspaper articles.

Veg campaign fails

The government campaign to encourage people to eat fruit and vegetables has failed, with a decline in the consumption of fruit and vegetables in the last year.

Shortage of trained staff putting hospital patients at risk

Patients are being put at risk by being left in the sole care of student nurses who do not have the training to deal with emergencies.

Mystery of girl who fell from cliff

Police last night were investigating the possibility that a teenage girl may have been pushed to her death from a 30m cliff.

£750 for victim of guide dog ban

A blind woman has won £750 compensation after she and her guide dog were refused entry to seven restaurants in one town because they operated 'no dog' policies.

Photocopiable © Oxford University Press

Procedure

A listening activity precedes the writing in this activity.

1 Play the recording of the news and ask the students to analyse the organization of each item, listening for possible types of content such as the events as they happened, background to the events, contrasting reported comments of participants or observers, and possible future developments.

2 Explain to students that they are going to prepare the scripts for a local or national news broadcast. Which of these you choose will depend on your students' interests and how well informed they are.

3 Ask your students to work in pairs or small groups so that you have a reasonable number of items for the broadcast.

4   Use one of the prompts suggested above to get the groups started. Headlines may be sufficient, one for each group; 'news in brief' items give a little more idea of content. It may be necessary with some groups to use short articles for a note-taking exercise, picking out key points of information and using them (once the articles have been removed) to write a script.

5   Each group should discuss and agree the content and organization of their item, and then write out the script. Meanwhile, you can monitor and give language help, if necessary.

6   The completed scripts should be broadcast, the sophistication of the broadcast depending on available facilities. Your students might like to:
—act out a panel of news readers at the front of the class, one reader elected from each group
—make an audio recording which can be played back for comment (and possibly remedial work)
—create a video recording which can be shown to the class.

Comments

This activity is a useful follow-up to work on reported speech. It also integrates well into a topic on the media. In fact, the activity can be expanded considerably into a larger project involving discussion of news items, auditions for newsreaders, etc. which would successfully integrate all the language skills.

1.11 Internet greetings

Level Elementary to intermediate

Time 50 minutes +

Aims To write real messages to other students using the Internet.

This activity has been included to provide an example of how useful electronic communication can be in providing students with real audiences and motivation to write real messages, but the activity could equally well be carried out without e-mail or Internet resources. Many other ideas for using the Internet can be found in another book in this series, *The Internet* by Windeatt, Hardisty, and Eastment.

Preparation

You will need:
—a list of e-mail addresses for the students in your class
—a list of students' birthdays
—enough computers so that students can cluster around them in groups of four or five. Each computer needs an Internet connection, e-mail, and a web browser.
—a list of websites which provide greetings cards (see Appendix, page 147, for some suggestions)
—a selection of birthday cards in English with different messages inside. (Some humorous ones work well.)

Procedure

1 Find out from the class which student has the nearest birthday.

2 Elicit from the class some possible birthday messages in a card for that student.

3 Ask students to work in groups at the computers and look up one of the greetings cards sites you write on the board. Show them how to work with the site.

4 Ask students to choose a birthday card and send it to their classmate.

5 Follow up with a discussion of the cards they chose and why. Discuss any problems they had with technology or language.

6 Put the lists of birthdays and e-mail addresses on the noticeboard. Appoint a student to check the list every week and remind students to send birthday cards.

7 Once students have practised choosing cards and have seen a variety of possible messages, they could create their own cards to send by e-mail.

1.12 Using emotive language

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 40–50 minutes +

Aims To help students appreciate the use of emotive language to create dramatic style.

Preparation

Each student will need a photocopy of the article about the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) crisis. Ideally, the class should have access to a set of good, monolingual dictionaries.

Procedure

1 Write the title of the article on the board and ask the class what they think it might mean.

Examples What does *masked* refer to?

Why is there panic in the city?

Which city could it be?

Give clues, if necessary, to the year (2003) and the country (China).

2 Once the context has been established, elicit what students already know about SARS. Ask them what they think the government did in Beijing to try to stop the spread of the virus. As you do this, write on the board any key vocabulary which will appear in the text and check that all students know it.

3 Ask students to read the text and to decide what style it is written in. Which of these adjectives would they use to describe it?

Examples

matter-of-fact	dramatic	exaggerated
restrained	objective	emotive
serious	neutral	conversational

4 Establish with students that the writer has tried to create a dramatic effect by using certain items of language. Ask students in pairs to underline or highlight anything in the text which they feel helps to create this effect. They will probably pick out mainly adjectives, for example, *desperate*, *stringent*; verbs, for example, *combat*, *fight*, *locked away*; and nouns, for example, *camp*, *victims*. It should not be necessary to use technical language in describing how the style is created.

5 Ask students to continue working in pairs to replace the items they have highlighted with more neutral language, using a dictionary.

6 When students have finished, go through the text with them, eliciting and commenting on the changes they have made.

A masked city of panic

NINE new SARS deaths were reported in China at the weekend. Severe steps have been taken in the capital Beijing. Cafes, theatres, and cinemas are all closed today in a desperate effort to combat the spread of the killer virus. The government, which has been hugely criticized for failing to act quickly enough, is now taking stringent measures to fight the illness. Beijing schools have been shut down and 1.7 million students ordered to stay at home.

Entertainment venues such as discos and karaoke clubs have been forced to close their doors. Stations are eerily quiet. Beijing is a city of masks as the cases of SARS increase and hysteria and panic escalate daily. A 1000-bed isolation camp has been assembled overnight, a bleak building of metal and plastic where victims of the virus will be locked away.

Photocopiable © Oxford University Press

Comments

This activity could be used with any similar, current news story, for example, extreme weather, accident, disaster, or anything else likely to use emotive language.

1.13 Changing style

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 40 minutes

Aims To help students appreciate differences between formal and informal style according to audience.

Preparation

You will need a photocopy of the worksheet for each student in the class.

1 Elicit from the class the etiquette that exists in their own culture for guests when they go to a more formal dinner. Prompt them by asking about time of arrival, when to start eating, conversation, smoking, second helpings, time of departure.

2 Then ask students what they know about going to a formal dinner in the UK and the appropriate etiquette. Use the same prompts.

3 Explain the aim of the activity—to see how language changes to create an appropriate style for the purpose and genre of the writing. Students should imagine they have been asked to give advice to a friend who has accepted an invitation to a dinner party with business contacts in the UK. The friend is uncertain about various points of etiquette.

4 Hand out worksheet 1.13 and explain the situation.

5 Ask students to compare the two versions of the first extract on Timing (one from the book and one from the letter) and to describe the ways in which they differ. Prompt students to elicit the following points:

—only the most important points have been selected
—many verbs have changed from passive to active
—contracted forms, e.g. *you'll* and *it's* are used
—the reader is addressed directly and personally
—less formal language is used, e.g. *very impolite* instead of *most improper.*

6 Ask students to work in groups to turn the other extracts into advice for a friend and change the style accordingly. Monitor the class as they work and give support.

7 Elicit suggestions from the class for each part of the letter and write them out on the board or on an OHT, correcting the language as you go, and pointing out how the style changes.

Worksheet 1.13

Giving advice on etiquette

A friend has asked you for advice on the etiquette of a dinner party in the UK. You have read about it in *Debrett's Guide to Etiquette and Modern Manners*. How would you write it down for your friend? Look at how the first extract from the book below has been changed. Then work in a group to decide how the other extracts should be changed. Select the most important points and change the language to an appropriate style.

Timing

Dinner is usually served between 8pm and 9pm but guests are invited to arrive up to half an hour beforehand. While it is of course a mistake to arrive before the stated time, it is most improper to be late. To keep others waiting is not only inconsiderate, but dinners must be carefully-timed events and delay can cause misfortunes in the kitchen. If there is some unavoidable delay, the hostess should be warned by telephone so that she may plan accordingly. Sometimes the happier solution for all concerned is to start dinner rather than wait.

Dear Basil

Here are some important points for you.

People in Britain usually serve dinner between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. but you'll probably be invited to arrive half an hour earlier. It's a mistake to arrive before the stated time but it's impolite to be very late. If you are unavoidably delayed, telephone your hostess to warn her.

When to begin

It is correct to begin to eat as soon as you are served, even if others have not been. This is the established custom and it has practical advantages; first, the food is more likely to be hot, and second, the hostess is spared boringly repetitive remarks of encouragement like 'Please don't wait . . .' or 'Please begin'—a familiar litany at so many dinner parties. Waiting for everyone to be served—though clearly instinctively polite—serves no useful purpose at a modern dinner table where there is no doubt that everyone will be served.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Conversation

At any dinner party—large or small, formal or informal—everybody has a duty to talk to the person sitting on either side. However shy a guest may be feeling, he can still follow the conversation round him and he should make a contribution where he can. It is not polite to sit through the meal in meek silence, and a good guest will always pull his own weight.

Conversation should be divided between the partners on either side and it would be extremely rude to spend most of the meal with your back turned to one of your companions at the table.

Drink

Wine may always be refused simply by saying, 'No thank you', or putting a hand briefly over the glass when you are offered wine. If you would like water to drink and there is no jug on the table, or water goblet, it is perfectly correct to ask if you may have some.

Second helpings

It used to be the rule that second helpings of food were not offered at dinner parties. This, however, has changed and, depending on the nature and quantity of the food left, the vast majority of hostesses offer second helpings. When offered a second helping, there is no need to feel ashamed of saying 'Yes'; your enjoyment is a compliment to your hostess (especially if she has also been the cook). But everyone is free to refuse.

Smoking

It is very discourteous to smoke at table unless the hosts in some way give the lead, by offering cigarettes or by lighting their own. No smoking should take place until all eating has finished.

Departure

People generally leave dinner parties between 11 pm and midnight but of course there are many exceptions to this. Certainly anyone staying later should gauge their hosts' states of mind, and, if in doubt, go unless pressed to stay.

The hosts should always go to the front door with departing guests, who will naturally thank them for their hospitality before leaving.

Thanking

In addition to thanking the hosts at the end of the evening, you must write a letter of thanks, preferably the next day (although a week's grace is permitted). In it, you should again express appreciation of the hospitality and—very important—mention one or two aspects of the party that you found particularly pleasant.

2

Composing

Introduction

What exactly do we do as writers when we compose a piece of writing? What kind of behaviour, what activities do writers become involved in before and during writing? How do they get going, how do they keep going, and what causes the 'blocks' that most writers experience at times when trying to write? What does the act of writing involve?

These are some of the questions which researchers into writing in a first and in a second language have addressed. There is consensus among them on one essential feature—that writing is a complex process with a number of operations going on simultaneously. Moreover, some writers seem to have a much better understanding of how to make the process work effectively for them.

These findings hold significant implications for the classroom. Can teachers help students, to a much greater extent than is current practice, with the process of composition? In many English language classrooms the pattern has been to set written work, perhaps with some discussion beforehand, and then to mark the incoming pieces of writing. In other words, the traditional focus has been much more on the end result of the composition process, that is, the product of writing. Research now seems to suggest that we could be as much concerned with responding to the student *writer* as to the student's *writing*.

It would certainly be useful for us as teachers to investigate the process of composition and to find out what it entails so that we can reflect on the problems it may present to our students. Then we will be in a better position to develop the most effective and helpful classroom practice.

As writers ourselves and as classroom teachers we can begin our investigations through introspection and observation. For example, think about the following:

1 Reflect on the process you go through when you
- write a letter to a friend
- write a report for your colleagues.

How do you start in each case? Do you think for a period before you write? Do you make a plan? Is your planning accompanied by note-making? Note down the various strategies you use while you are

writing. Do you stop and read through what you have written? How often do you read from the beginning again? How many times do you cross out or go back and put in extra sentences?

2 Observe a class of students writing. See what differences exist in their writing behaviour.

3 Talk to your students about how they write, what problems they have, and how they feel about writing.

One of the things I have done in my writing classes is to find out how my intermediate students perceive the process of writing and to match their introspections about how they write with what they write. With a new group it is useful to set a short writing activity and ask the students as they write to introspect on the strategies they are using and to make some notes about them. Here are some extracts which show the different approaches that learners took when asked to write about someone they admired:

First I made a list of words in my notebook.

I thought of a sentence to write down. Then I thought of some more and added them.

I wrote down some sentences in my book. Then I crossed them out and started again.

I wrote a page very quickly. Then I went from the beginning. I turned round some sentences to make a new organization.

I wrote: 'The person I most admire is...'. Then I stopped and thought for a few minutes. I wrote some notes in the margin: 'Close friend', 'Chilean refugee'. Then I wrote the end of the sentence. I added some more ideas quickly.

These notes gave me insights into the different strategies writers adopt and into the problems that some of the poorer writers experience.

This simple investigation into my own students' writing is a crude imitation of many careful and detailed studies undertaken into how skilled, as opposed to unskilled, writers go about their writing. Let us look at some of the insights that are now available to teachers and then go on to consider their implications for classroom practice.

What do we know about the process of writing?

In brief, the process of writing contains a number of activities which can be represented as in Figure 4:

being motivated to write → getting ideas together → planning and outlining → making notes → making a first draft → revising replanning redrafting → editing and getting ready for publication
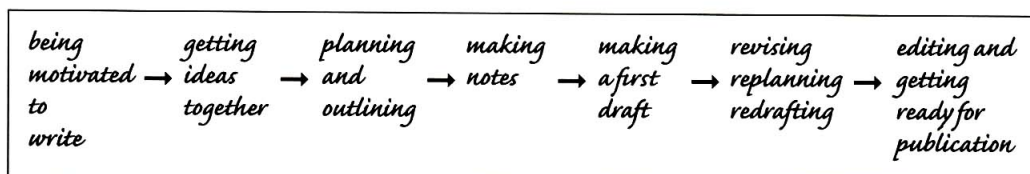
Figure 4

However, Figure 4 oversimplifies matters because, although writing involves these overall stages, the process of composition is not a linear one, moving from planning to composing to revising and editing. It would be more accurate to characterize writing as a recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards and forwards between drafting and revising, with stages of replanning in between.

In *Writing and the Writer*, Frank Smith (1982: 117) describes this recursive process in terms of the ways in which the text is moved around, modified, cut, or expanded:
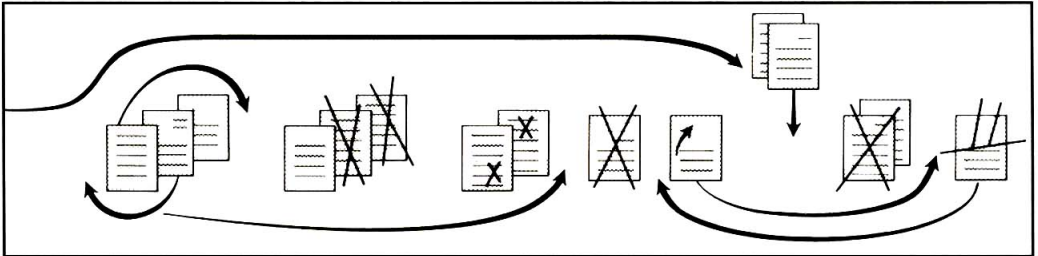
Figure 5

It is also important to point out that the amount of time spent on any part of the process will depend on the type of writing. For example, in writing a letter to a friend with the purpose of bringing her up to date with family news, one may well scribble down a list of things to include, but the planning is not likely to be as elaborate as when writing a report for colleagues at work on a matter of serious concern.

The process of writing is often described as consisting of three major activities or groups of activities:

1 Pre-writing

Before putting pen to paper, the skilled writer in real life considers two important questions:

What is the purpose of this piece of writing?

For example, is it a report which the writer hopes will be persuasive and stimulate action? Is it an explanation of how something works, which has to be careful, detailed, and clear? Is it a letter of invitation to some friends or a letter applying for a job? The purpose of the writing will influence the choice of organization and the choice of language. (This aspect of writing is considered in more detail in Chapter 3, 'Crafting'.)

Who am I writing this for?

The second question, as we saw in Chapter 1, 'Communicating', is to do with audience. The reader may be an individual, one you know well, or a group of colleagues, an institution, an examiner, or a tutor. Thinking about the eventual reader(s) helps the writer to select what to say and how to present it in the most appropriate style—formal, friendly, serious, or tentative.

The answers to these two questions provide the writer with a sense of purpose and a sense of audience, in other words, a writing context which significantly influences the first activity in the composition process, that of exploring possible content and planning outlines.

The good writer generates plans for writing at this stage, though, as we have seen, the amount of planning varies. We could draw a scale from comparatively spontaneous writing to very carefully planned writing and place different kinds of writing on it in appropriate places:
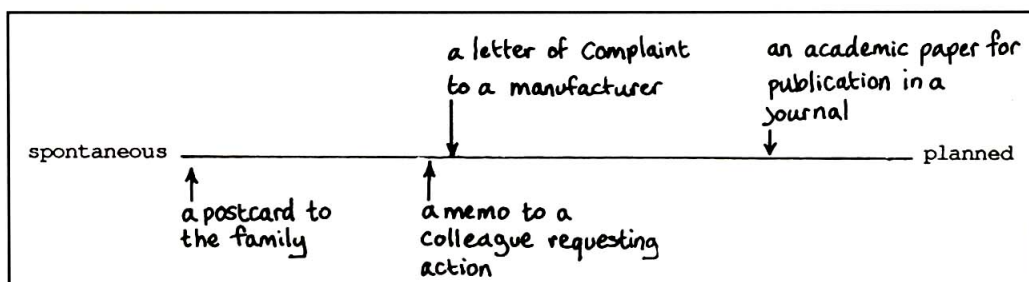
Figure 6

So, planning as a process may involve a variety of things: a set of five points jotted down to include in a letter home; more detailed notes and an outline plan; or a mental outline such as 'I'll start by describing the problems, then I'll suggest two alternatives; I'll give the Nigerian example and discuss its advantages, then ...'. However, even when quite elaborate outlines are prepared, good writers change their ideas as they write and reshape their plans. In *Process Writing*, White and Arndt (1991: 3) point to this tendency:

> ... writers rarely know at the outset exactly what it is they are going to write because many ideas are only revealed during the act of writing itself.

In fact, it is the poorer writers who see plans as strait-jackets and who follow the original plan through rigorously without deviation and without allowing the interplay between writing and thinking that can create new ideas and lead to improvements.

2 Drafting and redrafting

The second phase of activity is the writing itself, and with good writers this consists of making a first draft. But writing the first draft is often interrupted as the writer stops to read over and review, to get an idea of how the text is developing, to revise plans, and bring in new ideas or rearrange those already expressed. There is a good deal of recycling in the process from planning to drafting, reviewing, replanning, revising, etc. Good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right first and leave details like correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar until later.

Revision involves assessing what has already been written and deciding on points like these:

—Am I sharing my impressions clearly enough with my reader?

—Have I missed out any important points of information?

—Are there any points in the writing which may be unclear to my reader because I've omitted a line of argument or I've forgotten to explain something?

—Does the vocabulary need to be made stronger at any point?

—Are there some sentences which don't say much or which are too repetitive and can be missed out?

—Can I rearrange any sets of sentences to make the writing clearer or more interesting?

—Do I need to rearrange any paragraphs?

—Are the links between sections clear? Do they guide my reader through the writing?

In summary, the drafting process focuses primarily on *what* the writer wants to say, while redrafting progressively focuses on *how* to say it most effectively.

3 Editing

The post-writing stage consists of reading through and trying to apply a reader's perspective in order to assess how clearly readers might follow the ideas. The editing process makes the final readjustments and checks accuracy so that the text is maximally accessible to the reader. Some poor writers tend not to engage in editing but assume that their writing is clear to others because it is clear to them. Alternatively, poor writers may concentrate throughout the whole writing process on accuracy in grammar, punctuation, etc., without considering whether or not the overall structure is clear. They continually move from drafting to editing without any in-between stages of rethinking and reorganization. It is a less-than-effective process that might well be unwittingly encouraged by teachers whose strategy for marking is to correct only minor problems on the surface of the writing without commenting on any major problems in structure. This is an understandable strategy on the part of teachers, given the amount of marking most of us have to do. The problem and possible solutions are discussed in Chapter 4, 'Improving'.

What are the implications of this knowledge for the classroom?

The first question we perhaps need to ask as teachers is whether or not foreign-language learners need to be 'taught' the process of successful composition or if they need help in developing good strategies for writing. Can we not assume that writing skills learnt in a first language will transfer successfully to a second language?

Experience suggests that it would be unwise to assume that all students, or even the majority of students, are skilled writers in their mother tongue. Large numbers of young adults leave school without having become proficient writers.

Clearly EFL writers need help with linguistic form, that is with grammar, sentence structure, and so on. They often need help with the organization of texts as well, since conventions for this can differ from one language to another. But there is also a strong argument for saying that teachers also need to concern themselves and their English-language students with the process of composition. In *Learning to Write*, Ann Raimes (1983: 260) makes this point from her experience of working with adult ESL students:

> Students who do read and write well in the first language also need to work on the new creative activity of forming ideas in English for English-speaking audiences.

The next question, then, is in what ways teachers can develop classroom practices which will help students with the process of composition. Essentially, the teacher's role is to provide an environment in which students will learn about writing, see models of good writing, get plenty of practice in writing, and receive help during the writing process. The activities in this book are based on the following principles:

1 Teenage and adult students are aware of their own problems in writing, and they have attitudes and feelings about the writing process. Teachers can play a valuable part in raising awareness of the process of composition by talking explicitly about the stages of writing as well as by structuring activities to take account of it.

2 Teachers can play a support role during the early stages of the composition process by helping students to get their ideas together. This can be done by talking about things to generate ideas, doing things such as interviewing other students, pooling information, ideas, or opinions in the class, working from pictures, or reading texts of various kinds.

3 The teacher can also provide good models for writing, indirectly, by encouraging good reading habits but also directly, when appropriate, by analysing textual structure, particularly with some types of more formal academic writing.

4 Planning activities structured by the teacher can help students to develop a sense of direction in their writing, though they should always be encouraged to regard a plan as an enabling device or support rather than as a rigid control.

5 Teachers can encourage the drafting process by creating a workshop atmosphere in their classrooms, to the extent of providing rough paper, scissors, paste, erasers, etc., and while monitoring writing in progress, they can suggest that they are used for chopping and changing the structure of the text. Teachers can support the drafting process in various ways. They can intervene quietly, questioning and advising, in order to help writers get their ideas down on paper in English. Or they can encourage students to read each other's work and suggest restructurings and revisions. Giving help during writing proves far more effective than giving it afterwards.

The advent of the word processor in institutions which can afford the technology has great potential for encouraging students to develop revision strategies. Rewriting is more motivating when it can be done quickly, easily, and relatively painlessly by moving pieces of the text around. Alternatives can be evaluated and improvements immediately appreciated on the display screen.

6   Students need opportunities to engage in writing as a holistic process of composition. This means that they need practice in writing whole pieces of communication, not just controlled exercises in sentence structure, grammar, or bits and pieces of paragraph development. These activities have their place, as students need to be accurate in their writing, but they are not sufficient in themselves.

One answer is to work with individual students on correcting errors in their own drafts so that the focus on accuracy takes place within the context of work already produced. Another is to offer a series of writing activities which focus on aspects of accuracy but which take place within the context of whole texts. (This approach can be seen in many of the activities in Chapter 3, 'Crafting'.)

In summary, the classroom needs to provide an environment in which students can experience being writers, thinking about purpose and audience, drafting a piece of writing, revising it, and sharing it with others. As Chris Tribble points out in his book *Writing*, teachers need to 'encourage creativity in very practical ways.' (1996:40)

The activities in this chapter contain ideas and techniques for the pre-writing stages, and are divided into two sets. Activities 2.1–2.11 elicit ideas, information, and opinions from the students. They are based on experience and intuition. Activities 2.12–2.15 provide students with 'data' of some kind and encourage them to reflect, react, etc. Together, these activities initiate the process of generating ideas and begin the process of organizing them.

2.1 Making mind maps

Level Lower-intermediate to advanced

Time 30 minutes +

Aims To introduce and encourage the pre-writing strategy of making notes.

Preparation

This activity can be carried out quite simply on a board or OHT. If you draw spontaneously while eliciting ideas from the class, students will quickly grasp the value of this pre-writing activity. It's a good idea to practise making a mind map on the topic before you try it in class. The topic chosen here is a family wedding.

Procedure

1 Ask students to think individually about a wedding in their family. They should jot down all the things associated with the wedding that come into their minds. Set a definite time limit (a couple of minutes). Let students jot down things in their first language if they do not know the English words. They can then share their ideas in small groups.

2 Elicit ideas from the groups and, as they suggest things, start to create a mind map on the board so that they can see how you draw out aspects of the topic and subgroup items. As they listen to other students making suggestions and to your explanations and corrections, they will learn the English for ideas they have jotted down. This is an invaluable way to learn vocabulary, at the point of need. The reasoning behind mind maps is that we do not necessarily think in an ordered or linear way with some topics, but rather explore them by moving between their various elements. The map could look something like this when it is under way (although the content, of course, will vary, depending on the culture of the student group):

bridesmaids

best man → people   preparations

bride and groom

guest list

invitations

A family wedding

food

speeches → reception

wedding cake

presents

religious or civil ceremony

service

customs

photographs
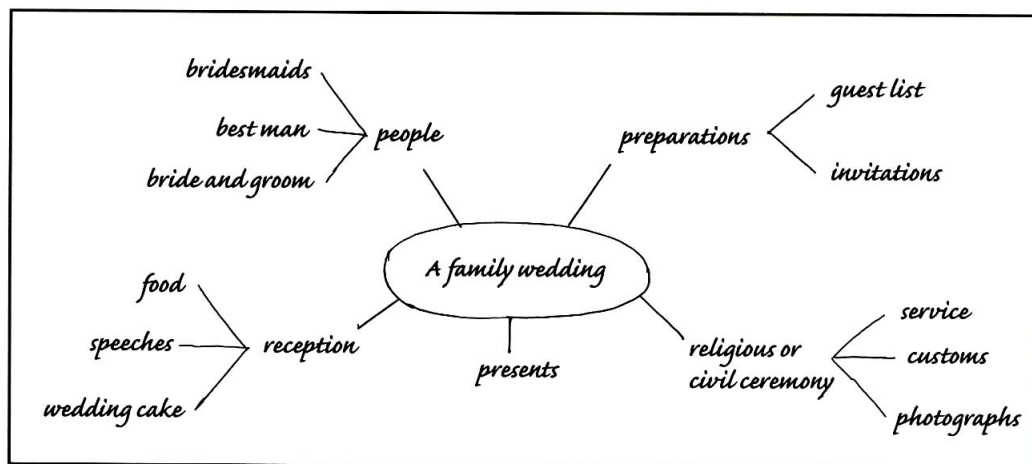
3 Branches can be added to the mind map as students suggest new ideas or add ideas to already established aspects. The end result is a map with topics and subtopics radiating from the central topic.

4 When the map is reasonably full, lead a class discussion on the best order of items in a composition. An audience and purpose will need to be decided in order to do this effectively, for example, a description in a letter to a friend overseas or a more formal piece for a cultural guide for visitors to your country.

5 Alternative writing activities are then possible. Students can
—elaborate the mind map for a wedding and write it up.
—create a mind map for another family event, for example, a birthday, and then write it up.

6 Encourage students to begin the process of writing and to share their work with classmates, in order to get feedback and make appropriate revisions.

Comments

Making a mind map is a strategy for making notes before writing; in other words, scribbling down ideas about the topic and developing ideas as the mind makes associations. The strategy can be used to explore almost any topic. Once the strategy has been established with students, they can be encouraged to use it in subsequent writing activities. The advantage of mind maps as an organizing strategy, particularly with descriptions, is that all the aspects of a topic can be seen in relation and in proportion to each other, and possible links between paragraphs or sections of an essay become easily apparent.

2.2 Using a diagram of ideas

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 30 minutes +

Aims To introduce a logical pre-writing activity for writing a formal 'for and against' essay.

Preparation

In this activity you will elicit ideas from students, who can then use them in their own writing. Ideally, students will provide all the necessary content but it is as well to be prepared by working out the 'for' and 'against' arguments before the class. The topic chosen here is 'Mobile phones are a wonderful invention'.

Procedure

1 Write the topic on the board and ask students to think quietly whether they agree or disagree with the statement and what arguments they could use to support their opinion.

2 Ask a student to volunteer an argument for the statement and then ask another to volunteer an argument against it. Use these to begin drawing a diagram on the board (see below).

For

- quick to reach emergency services
- provides security in case car breaks down
- can be constantly in touch with office
- can keep in touch with children away from home
- can phone for advice while shopping
- _____
- _____
- _____

Against

- annoying to hear phones ringing on trains, buses, etc.
- can be dangerous if used while driving
- it is embarrassing to hear personal conversations
- _____
- _____
- _____

Arguments for and against mobile phones

3 Ask students to work in small groups to provide further 'for' and 'against' arguments until each group has several of each. Set a time limit which you think is appropriate to the level of the group.

4 Elicit arguments from the class in order to elaborate the diagram. As you do so, provide vocabulary, correct grammar, useful phrases, etc.

5 Students can then begin the process of composition, using the ideas provided by the diagram, prioritizing them according to their own views, and adding further ideas as the process of writing generates thinking.

Comments

The writing activity above is a formal composition of a type found in public examinations. It requires a discursive essay of the 'for and against' variety. The technique outlined is also useful for the 'advantages and disadvantages' type of essay. Eliciting arguments from the class is a valuable activity as language can be provided by the teacher within the contexts that students create for themselves as they try to express their ideas in English.

2.3 Pyramid discussion

Level Lower-intermediate to advanced

Time 40–50 minutes +

Aims To help students generate ideas and organize them for a description.

Preparation

Students will write a publicity brochure or guide to their own educational institution. They will therefore provide the content but it is as well to have some ideas of your own ready in order to prompt if any pair or group is short of ideas. This could include such things as:
—the appearance of the school and its grounds
—any special facilities
—the reputation it has for academic work, sport, craft, music, etc.
—any particular points about its curriculum.

Procedure

1 Explain the context of the activity to students and that the purpose of the brochure is to promote the worth of the institution in the wider community. Give them a sense of how much material is needed. Ask what sort of content the publicity brochure should contain. What are the very good aspects of their school or college? What would they most want to promote? Elicit some ideas from the class.

2 Ask students to work individually for a few minutes. They should jot down some ideas for content.

3 Ask students to work in pairs. Each pair should discuss possible content for the brochure and make notes on it. Give a time limit appropriate to the level of your students.

4 Then organize the class into groups of four, each member from a different pair to allow the widest exchange of ideas. Each student should then have a comprehensive list of possible content.

5 Suggest that each student decides their own content from the list and prioritizes in his or her own way. Then ask the class to start drafting.

Comments

This activity is useful for planning other similar descriptions such as a description of a town or sports centre for a tourist guide. It is also useful for planning arguments. Pairs and then fours can work out a set of arguments supporting a proposition and, in this way, gather together a wider set of arguments.

2.4 Brainstorming

Level Intermediate

Time 50 minutes +

Aims To help with the task of generating ideas before writing.

Preparation

The topic here is 'An amusing memory'. You can begin the activity by using a text in which a writer recounts an amusing memory. Good examples can be found in Laurie Lee's *Cider with Rosie*, Elspeth Huxley's *The Flame Trees of Thika*, or Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men in a Boat*. Alternatively, you could tell the class of a funny incident from your own experience. An extract from Gerald Durrell's *My Family and Other Animals* is used here as an example.

Procedure

1 Let students skim through the extract from *My Family and Other Animals* and ask them for their response to the situation. Focus on their response as readers rather than on comprehension. Alternatively, tell students a memory of your own which you think they will find amusing.

2 Ask if anyone in the class remembers something equally amusing and let them describe what they remember.

3 Ask students to write down everything in note form that they can remember about an incident from their own experience. Tell them not to worry about language or even clarity but to get as much down on paper as they can. Give a time limit for this, perhaps five minutes. If students have difficulty in getting started, suggest that they close their eyes and focus on the incident, remembering sights, sounds, smells, etc.

4 Ask students to work in pairs and tell each other about their memories, talking from the notes they have made.

5 Then allow another five minutes for students to jot down any ideas or associations which the discussion has generated.

6 Ask students to choose one of their memories and consider the details of the circumstances associated with it, for example, the

season, the time, the people involved, the incident, and to write more detailed notes on them.

7 Again, students should talk about the incident with their partner.

8 Students should now have plenty of ideas for writing a composition on 'An amusing memory', and can begin the process of writing.

Comments

One of the most difficult tasks for many writers, especially when dealing with the more 'imaginative' topics set by teachers or examiners, is trying to think of things to write about. It is a classic stumbling block. Help is most usually provided by talking about the topic beforehand and this can be done in pairs or groups or with the whole class. Brainstorming is an activity which aims to help students with this pre-writing stage of getting ideas together.

Acknowledgements

The idea for this activity comes from a sequence in Ron White's book *Writing: Advanced*, in which he develops the topic of food and its associations.

Sample text For some time Mother had greatly envied us our swimming, both in the daytime and at night, but, as she pointed out when we suggested she join us, she was far too old for that sort of thing. Eventually, however, under constant pressure from us, Mother paid a visit into town and returned to the villa coyly bearing a mysterious parcel. Opening this she astonished us all by holding up an extraordinary shapeless garment of black cloth, covered from top to bottom with hundreds of frills and pleats and tucks.

'Well, what d'you think of it?' Mother asked.

We stared at the garment and wondered what it was for.

'What is it?' asked Larry at length.

'It's a bathing costume, of course,' said Mother. 'What on earth did you think it was?'

'It looks to me like a badly skinned whale,' said Larry, peering at it closely.

'You can't possibly *wear* that, Mother,' said Margo, horrified, 'why, it looks as if it was made in nineteen-twenty.'

'What are all those frills and things for?' asked Larry with interest.

'Decoration, of course,' said Mother indignantly.

'What a jolly idea! Don't forget to shake the fish out of them when you come out of the water.'

'Well, *I* like it, anyway,' Mother said firmly, wrapping the monstrosity up again, 'and I'm going to wear it.'

'You'll have to be careful you don't get waterlogged, with all that cloth around you,' said Leslie seriously.

'Mother, it's *awful*, you can't wear it,' said Margo. 'Why on earth didn't you get something more up-to-date?

'When you get to my age, dear, you can't go around in a two-piece bathing suit ... you don't have the figure for it.'

'I'd love to know what sort of figure that was designed for,' remarked Larry.

'You really are *hopeless*, Mother,' said Margot despairingly.

'But I *like* it.... and I'm not asking you to wear it,' Mother pointed out belligerently.

'That's right, you do what you want to do,' agreed Larry; 'don't be put off. It'll probably suit you very well if you can grow another three or four legs to go with it.'

Mother snorted indignantly and swept upstairs to try on her costume. Presently she called to us to come and see the effect, and we all trooped up to the bedroom. Roger was the first to enter, and on being greeted by this strange apparition clad in its voluminous black costume rippling with frills, he retreated hurriedly through the door, backwards, barking ferociously. It was some time before we could persuade him that it really was Mother, and even then he kept giving her vaguely uncertain looks from the corner of his eye. However, in spite of all opposition, Mother stuck to her tent-like bathing suit, and in the end we gave up.

From: *My Family and Other Animals* by Gerald Durrell

2.5 Making linear notes

Level   **Intermediate**

Time   **40 minutes +**

Aims   **To help with the pre-writing activities of listing, selecting, and grouping ideas, and organizing them into a plan for writing.**

The strategy of brainstorming in Activity 2.4 is especially useful in creative writing, where a spontaneous and unstructured flow of thoughts is a good way to get ideas together. Brainstorming can also be effective as the first stage in more formal types of writing. However, some forms of writing are probably best tackled with a more structured approach from the beginning. Structure is required before putting pen to paper; it also implies a process of controlling ideas. The following activity aims to help students organize ideas in more formal writing.

Preparation

Choose a topic which involves description and which lends itself to listing content and sorting it into sections. The topic chosen here is to describe a place. Students will be asked to write about their home village, town, or city, or the place they are studying in. Prepare a list of points that is relevant to your class.

Procedure

1   Introduce the topic and ask students what items they think should go into a composition of this type. Write a list of suggestions on the board as they are offered. Prompt students if they run out of ideas with items from the list you have prepared.

2   Give students your list of points and ask them to add any points from the board which are not already listed.

3   Explain that some points in the list are headings and cover or subsume other points. Ask students to work out the headings and the points they cover.

4 When each student has finished this, you can organize checking between partners.

5 Students decide next on the order of points. This can be done individually, in pairs, or as a whole class with you. If done in pairs or individually, there should be a feedback session to discuss the criteria for organization (i.e. Is there some kind of logical order? Does one section naturally lead on to another? What is the best point at which to begin or end?).

6 Students now have a list which they can use to organize their own pieces of writing. However, they should be encouraged to review the list and add items or categories which are particularly relevant to their own context.

Here is a list to demonstrate what to do:

Example　My home town—Skibbereen, West Cork, Ireland

Spring storms	Market town	Local tourist attractions
Cattle market	Stone quarries	Drombeg stone circle
Amenities	Location and setting	'Welcome home' week
Agricultural show	Special events	Restaurants and bars
Rainfall	Exhibition hall	Surrounding hills and lakes
Sports centre	Industry and business	
Nearby beaches	Union Hall fishing village	

Lough Hyne Nature Reserve on River Ilen

Comments

The major purpose of this activity is to show students how planning for more formal pieces of writing can consist of three stages: listing, selecting and grouping, and organizing. As with other activities, a balance between giving ideas and providing the opportunity to add, develop, and create content is advisable, so that students learn to appreciate that plans should be used in a flexible way and are subject to revision.

2.6　Imagining dialogues

Level　Elementary to upper-intermediate

Time　30 minutes +

Aims　To help students write relevant content by imagining the reader's questions.

This is a particularly useful device for planning letters, notes, and emails. The basic idea is that the writer imagines the conversation that might replace the written message. In other words, they visualize the reader and work out the dialogue. In this way they can imagine the questions a reader might ask, even the order in which they might ask them. It is a technique that ensures all the relevant content is included and ordered in a sensible manner. The activity below involves an informal message but the technique works equally well with formal letters, for example, letters of application.

Preparation

The context for this activity is that of giving advice to a friend staying in your house. You will elicit ideas from the students but it is a good idea to have some prompts of your own ready. You could write the beginning of the message on the board or have an OHT or photocopies prepared.

Procedure

1   Explain the context. You could personalize it by saying that some friends of yours are coming to stay in your house while you are away, that you won't be able to meet them so you are leaving a note for them and your keys with a neighbour. What information, instructions, and advice should you put in the note?

2   Elicit a few ideas from the class and write them in correct English on the board. Use them to introduce some useful language.

Examples   Please remember to put the rubbish out on Thursday mornings.
You need to lock the windows if you go out.
Don't forget to turn the water off when you leave.
You'll find a post office at the end of the road if you turn left out of the gate.
There is a lovely park nearby which has open-air concerts in the evening.

3   Ask students to imagine that they are in the same situation but can have a conversation with the friends who are coming to stay. What questions do they think their friends would ask? Elicit some questions from the class. Be ready with some prompts.

Examples   How do we turn the heating on?
What are the rules about putting rubbish out?
How often should we water the house plants/the garden?
Is there a good supermarket nearby?

4   Students could then continue thinking of questions and formulating answers in pairs. After a short while elicit further ideas to write on the board, providing and correcting language as you do so.

5   Give students the beginning of the note on the board or as a photocopy and ask them to complete it in their own way.

Sunday, September 12th
Dear Gabriel
Welcome to Bluebell Cottage! I hope you had a good journey. Sorry I can't be here to meet you but here are a few instructions about the house. Richard next door will always help if

2.7 Working from opening sentences

Level Beginners to advanced

Time 40–50 minutes preparation + individual writing time

Aims To help students develop a sense of direction in narrative writing.

Preparation

From a variety of novels or short stories, find some interesting or intriguing opening sentences or compose some of your own. The examples below are suitable for intermediate students.

Examples

> There were no curtains. The window was a hard-edged block, the colour of the night sky. Inside the room, the darkness was intense. Silence.

> One hot, dreamy afternoon, when everything seemed to be asleep, I set out to see how far I could climb over the hills before dark.

> Nobody saw the accident. The small black car was found on its side, at the bottom of the hill by the bridge, half in the water. There was the body of a young woman in the car.

> It seemed as if he had hardly closed his eyes when he was woken by the sound of the door. He sat up sleepily and saw it was only a robot delivering breakfast.

> We threaded our way out of the noise and confusion of the station into the brilliant sunshine. Around us the town rose steeply, tiers of multi-coloured houses piled high, overlooking the unbelievable blue of the bay.

> 'Don't you think you're being rather selfish?' Dan's voice sounded cold and Rosa looked at him unhappily.

Photocopiable © Oxford University Press

Procedure

1 Take one of the story openings and discuss it with the class. Ask them to imagine who the characters in the story are, where it is set, how the narrative might continue, and what events might happen. (Opening sentences should be chosen or written at the appropriate language level).

2 Ask students to work in pairs and give them some questions to direct their discussion. You could set a time limit to focus discussion. Possible questions are:

Examples Which of these sentences do you think is most effective as a story opener and why?
How do you think the story continues?
What sort of story do you think it opens?
How do you think the story continues?

3 Hold a feedback session with the whole class and elicit their opinions. Encourage students to ask questions of those who volunteer opinions, so that the whole class becomes involved in the discussion.

4 Arrange students in pairs (or fours with students who chose the same opening sentences) and ask them to plan the rest of the story.

5 Students then follow the plan but write individual stories, stopping to read each other's work and make comment. Encourage them to use the outline in a flexible way, elaborating with their own ideas or moving away from the plan if other ideas develop.

Comments

A good writer has a convincing sense of direction. One way to start developing this in writers is through writing narratives such as these, which these particularly need a sense of moving forward from an effective beginning towards a goal of some kind. This activity shows a number of principles at work. Step 3 of the procedure enables cross-fertilization of ideas in the class at the stage of getting ideas together and planning content. Step 4 allows collaborative planning of outlines which are then used in a flexible way by individual students as it is important for them to appreciate that a plan should not be a strait-jacket. Step 5 provides an audience for the writer and other readers' perspectives on the possibilities for improving and rewriting.

2.8 Freewriting

Level Lower-intermediate to advanced

Time 30 minutes +

Aims To provide a strategy for dealing with writer's block.

Freewriting is a technique which has the main purpose of generating ideas. It tries to overcome the problem of writer's 'block'. It has sometimes been called speedwriting or quickwriting because its main feature is writing as quickly as possible without stopping. Its other main feature, a product of the speed, is that the writer concentrates on content rather than on form. In this way, the primary focus is on getting as many ideas down on paper as possible. At a later stage, quality can take over from quantity in a process of selection and redrafting.

Freewriting is a useful follow-on activity from brainstorming which can be done as a class or with students working individually. The latter technique is used in the sequence set out below.

Preparation

No preparation is needed but you should have a board or an OHP which can be seen clearly by the class.

Procedure

1 Explain to the class that you are going to try out a technique called freewriting, which some writers find useful as a way of getting started and developing ideas for a theme. The theme here is 'Learning a foreign language'.

2 Ask students to brainstorm individually for a few minutes and jot down their experiences of learning a foreign language, noting anything that occurs to them. Do the same yourself while they are writing.

3 Make yourself a guinea-pig and demonstrate freewriting to your students (or ask a colleague to come in to do it). Choose an item from your notes and start writing freely and quickly on the board or on an OHT so that the class can watch you composing. Try to elaborate on the item you have chosen from your notes. Tell your students beforehand not to interrupt but to stop you after you have covered about ten or twelve lines. This is what I produced when I experimented with my class:

Example

> What I remember most about learning French at school is singing French songs (which were incomprehensible to me) on a Friday afternoon during the lesson, and singing them deliberately out of tune to annoy the teacher. I was about eleven years old then. And I remember a textbook which was full of stories about a silly boy called Toto and his family. I did endless grammar exercises which I didn't understand and always got wrong. I didn't feel very positive about France or French people then. In fact, it wasn't till much later, when I visited Brittany, that French began to make sense.

4 Show students how one part of the writing could then be taken to elaborate further as you begin to remember more. I bracketed the part about singing and went on to produce a further paragraph.

5 Encourage students to try the same process and give them time to work quietly by themselves. When they can't think of anything more to write, they should go back to their notes and choose another point to freewrite about.

6 The students should end up with notes, paragraphs, and partly elaborated points; in other words, a collection of partially drafted pieces of writing which are now ready to be redrafted with an eye to accurate language, organization, and development of the theme.

Comments

The advantage of freewriting is that it helps students to discover the things they can write about within a general theme. It also obliges students to redraft, thereby highlighting the importance of redrafting in the process of composing. However, you should be aware of the probable variation of response to this activity. It seems to suit some personalities very well and I found some of my students using it a good deal afterwards. Other writers, including myself, are far less comfortable with it and prefer to think for a good while before putting pen to paper. It is probably best, therefore, to introduce freewriting as an experiment and talk about it as one of a range of techniques which might be useful to the individual writer.

2.9 Cubing

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 40 minutes +

Aims To provide an invention process of considering a topic from six different perspectives.

Cubing is a technique which involves consideration of a topic from six points of view. It is an invention process which can be visualized as bringing together six sides of a cube which holds the subject inside.

Preparation

You will need to prepare the cubing framework for students, with some explanatory notes, as in the worksheet below.

Procedure

1 Introduce the topic, the Internet, by asking students what sort of people use the Internet, what they use it for, and what they feel its values are. Elicit uses and values from the class and develop useful language on the board.

2 Use Worksheet 2.9 below to develop discussion about the Internet. Do the first item with the whole class and ask them to describe the Internet.

Worksheet 2.9
Cubing

Describing:	Look closely at the topic and describe what you see.
Comparing:	What is this topic similar to and what is it different from?
Analysing:	Analyse the topic in more detail. What is it made up of? What are its parts or elements?
Associating:	What do you associate with this topic? What does it remind you of?
Arguing:	How can you argue for it? And against it?
Applying:	What can you do with it? How can it be used?

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3 Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to go through the other five points on the worksheet and interpret them in relation to the Internet. Give them a time limit for this activity.

4 Hold a feedback session with the class, eliciting ideas and putting them on the board. Students will then have gathered sufficient ideas to write an essay on the Internet, taking whatever perspective they wish.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Eman El Sayed Arafa Abdel-Razek Amer, who reminded me of the usefulness of this technique when I read her description of how she used it with college students in Egypt. Her students worked in groups of six and applied the framework over time to a set of topics which included: Tourism as a source of national income; TV and mass media; Peace and war; Mother's Day; Space travel; Childhood; Pollution; and The value of reading. She credits her source of the technique as Daubney-Davis (1982).

2.10 Using visuals to focus descriptions

Level   Elementary to advanced (depending on the picture chosen and whether you are able/wish to use the first language)

Time   20–30 minutes +

Aims   To help students see the importance of selection and focus in writing a description.

Preparation

You will need to make a collection of pictures, cut out from magazines, postcards, or even your own enlarged photographs, sufficient for a class set, which show interesting scenes or still life. It can be useful to work with other teachers to prepare this resource, which can then be used by several classes. If the pictures are mounted on card and covered with plastic film, they can make a permanent resource. The pictures must be clear and show a number of objects or people in relationship to each other. Still life or scenes are most appropriate, as in the examples.

Procedure

1   Give each student a picture. (This activity also works well as pair work.) Ask students to study their picture closely and look at each part of the composition in turn. Can they describe the scene clearly in words as the photographer or artist has captured it?

2   Ask students to decide what is the most important or striking thing about the picture. What would they write about first in describing it? How would they bring in the other parts of the picture?

3   Ask students to write a first draft of a paragraph describing the picture. As they finish drafting, write these questions on the board.

   • What is the focus of the picture and where is it in the picture?
   • Where have you described this focus in your paragraph?
   • Have you followed a certain order in your writing for example, foreground to background, right to left, top to bottom? If so, why?
   • Could you improve on the order?
   • How will your description change if you move the order around?

4   Encourage students to review their work against these questions and start redrafting.
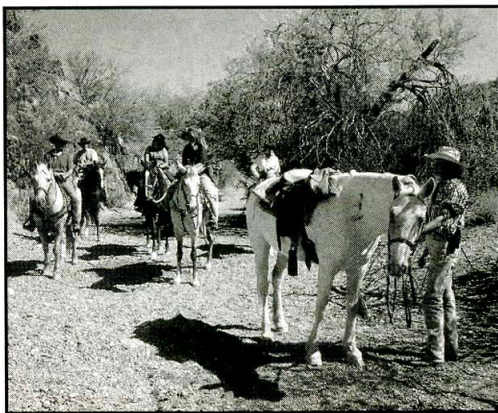
Photocopiable © Oxford University Press

Comments

Using a picture to plan a description is a useful technique for helping students to see the importance of selection and focus in developing a description which is non-chronological, for example, of places, people, or scenes. A writer has to decide how best to describe something so that the reader can reconstruct a true image of it. This means deciding what to focus on first and how to relate the various elements. This activity can be used to bring in the related roles of purpose in the writer and interest in the reader.

2.11 Writing poetry

Level Lower-intermediate to advanced

Time 15 minutes introduction + individual writing time

Aims To create an opportunity for expressive writing.

Poetry is expressive writing of the most personal kind and, as such, needs careful and sensitive treatment. It should always be an optional activity in general purpose English language teaching with multilingual groups and multicultural backgrounds. In monolingual classes its use should be determined by the goals of the curriculum and the judgement of a teacher who knows the background and attitudes of the students.

The two activities below were used with young women aged eighteen to twenty, mostly from European backgrounds. Two friends in the class brought in some poetry they had written in English and showed it to me and others in the group. In response to class interest, I made activities A and B below (pasted into manila folders) for self-access or homework. Both activities were originally designed for sixteen-year-olds in British schools. The examples of students' work show how poetry can motivate students to try out this kind of personal expression themselves.

The type of Chinese poem, in translation, selected for the first activity demonstrates the language of imagination but it is a clear and comprehensible language. Writing poems in blank verse gives students the opportunity to explore the language, organize ideas in

detail, manipulate sentence structure, select words, and create collocations. It also encourages a careful drafting process. The students came to me with drafts for comment and were anxious to choose the best words and make their poems sound right.

Activity A **Preparation**

This activity could work with any fairly simple poetic forms, even limericks. I used Chinese verse in translation because it is possible to find several poems on the same theme. The poems and instructions were pasted inside a folder which could be borrowed by individual students.

Procedure

1 Take a small amount of class time to introduce the idea of writing poetry, as it may not appeal to all students. The introduction may come naturally by reading a poem relating to a learning topic. With a motivated class it could arise from reading and studying a poem in class. Say a little about the value of writing poetry for language learning, the focus needed on words, word order, etc.

2 Show students Worksheet 2.11 and the examples of students' poems. Invite them to try writing at home and say you will be glad to look at their drafts and make comments.

3 Make time available to those students who experiment to bring their drafts to you for advice and comments.

Worksheet 2.11

Chinese poems

In Chinese history it was considered a mark of respect for a young poet to repeat the theme of an earlier poet's work, within the same form. One common theme is the thoughts and feelings of a lonely woman who is waiting for her husband or lover to return.

1 Read the poems below.   2 Can you write a short verse on the same theme?

HSÜ KAN

A wife's thoughts, III

Since you, sir, went away,
My bright mirror is dim and untended.
My thoughts of you are like flowing water;
Will they ever have an end?

FAN YÜN

In imitation of 'Since you, sir, went away'

Since you, sir, went away,
My gauze curtains sigh in the autumn's wind.
My thoughts of you are like the creeping grass
That grows and spreads without end.

WANG JUNG

In imitation of Hsü Kan

Since you, sir, went away,
My golden burner has had no incense,
For thinking of you I am like the bright candle,
At midnight vainly burning itself away.

From: *The Penguin Book of Chinese Verse*

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Example The following are examples of students' poems based on the worksheet:

> Since you, sir, went away,
> My heart is sad and lonely.
> I walk among pale white lilies;
> They mirror my melancholy mood.
>
> Marie Christine

> Since you, sir, went away,
> The leaves have fallen from the trees.
> The flowing river has frozen hard with ice
> And I am cold and lonely.
>
> Brita

Activity B **Preparation**

You can make folders in the same way as in Activity A and add the example given below of a shape poem written by a student.

Procedure

1 Take a small amount of class time to introduce students to the idea of a shape poem. Show them the example below on an OHT or on the board or make photocopies for the class.

2 Ask students to brainstorm individually for a couple of minutes on things which have distinctive shapes and might make good shape poems. Suggest they think about animals, flowers, toys, machines, or objects from the natural world.

3 With a suitable class, who respond well to the idea, it may be worth taking time in class to choose a shape and brainstorm ideas for the content of the poem. Alternatively, suggest interested students try a shape poem at home. Encourage students to bring their drafts to you for advice and comment.

Comments

A good way to proceed if a number of students experiment, and with their permission, is to create a wall display of their work.

More activities for writing poetry can be found in *Creative Poetry Writing*, in this series.

Example The following is an example of a student's shape poem.

I
tower above the streets and houses down below.
The helicopters greet me as they pass, like
I look   whirring
down   insects.
at   They
the   b
move-   u
ment   z
below   z
me.   a
To   w
where   a
my   y.
feet
stand
hard
against
the
earth.
I
am
a crane.

MajBrit Eklund
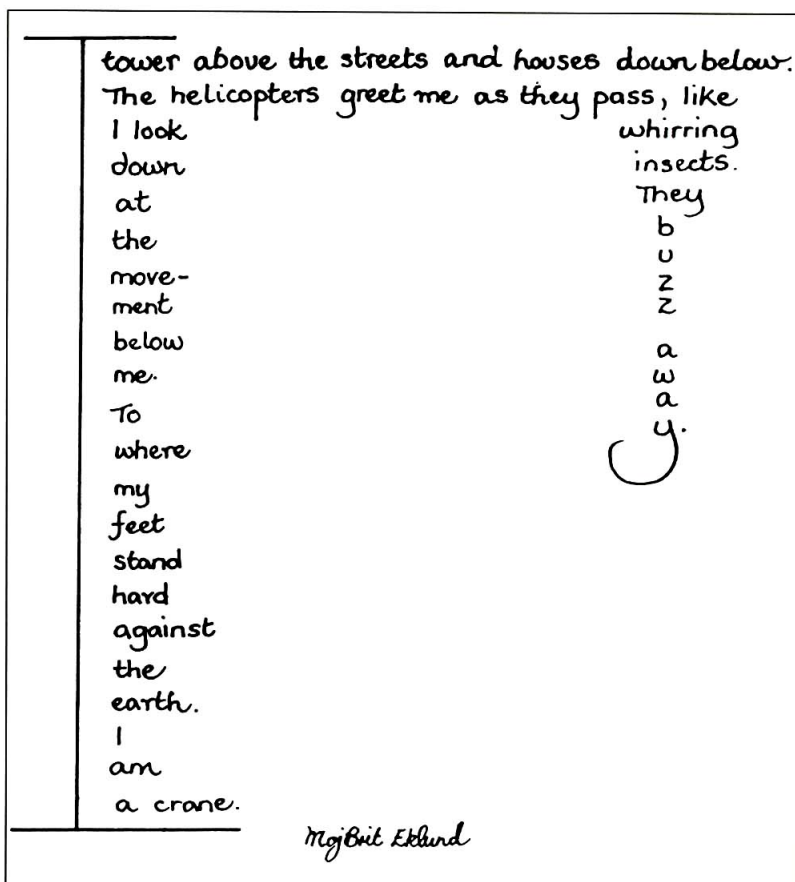
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2.12 Using opinionnaires

Level Lower-intermediate to advanced

Time 30–40 minutes +

Aims To provoke response and reaction to a topic as preparation for composing.

Opinionnaires, especially if designed with controversial statements for discussion, can be effective devices for motivating writers and providing students with content for their individual writing. They provoke response and reaction which can be explored in classroom discussion as a precursor to writing. Students thus have an opportunity to explore ideas, make selections, and begin organizing their writing.

Preparation

You will need to prepare copies of the opinionnaire below so that students can use them to question each other.

The topic, a view of television, could be introduced by making a collection of statements which give views on television. They could be presented as speech bubbles on a sheet, which could be photocopied or they could be displayed on a wall poster.

There's too much sport on TV for me.

Cut out TV violence!

TV stops conversation at home.

The documentaries are educational.

Children's TV programmes keep my children happy and occupied.

It helps me keep up with the news.

I watch holiday programmes and decide where to go.

Procedure

1 Warm up to the topic by selecting some of the statements and asking students what they suggest and what their own opinions are.

2 Hand out the opinionnaires and ask students to look at them individually and tick 'agree' or 'disagree'.

3 Then ask students to work in pairs. They should exchange opinions and tick their partner's agreement or disagreement in the second column. Encourage them to justify their opinions and say as much as possible.

4 An optional step would be to hold a short class discussion and elicit opinions, using them to develop useful vocabulary on the board.

5 Ask students to continue working in pairs and think of statements they could add to the opinionnaire. Give them a few minutes to brainstorm on this.

6 Elicit suggestions from the class for further statements and write them on the board.

7 Students should now have lots of ideas for their own pieces of writing, a composition with the title 'My view of television'.

Opinionnaire

	You		Your partner	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
1 I believe TV makes people passive.				
2 TV makes people unsociable and unadventurous.				
3 I've become addicted to TV. I have to switch it on and it stays on for hours.				
4 It's not a good influence on children.				
5 It's too permissive and there's too much violence.				
6 People copy bad behaviour and crime.				
7 The programmes are mediocre.				
8 Children learn so much from TV, things I never had the opportunity to learn when I was a child.				
9 It's the quickest way to keep up with the news.				
10 Many TV programmes are very useful.				
11 It has the potential to make us all citizens of the world.				
12 Documentary programmes are so educational.				
13				
14				
15				
16				

2.13 Using journalists' questions

Level   Intermediate to advanced

Time   45 minutes +

Aims   To encourage the collection of facts from various sources in order to create a text.

Preparation

You need to find two newspaper articles reporting on the same incident. A good source would be local or regional newspapers which tend to report human interest stories like the one in the example below. Try to ensure that the texts are of approximately the same length and will take about the same amount of time to read. You need enough copies of each of the two texts, A and B, for half the class.

Procedure

1   Ask the class to imagine themselves as journalists about to report a news incident. What would they want to find out about it? What questions would they ask? Elicit some questions from the class and write them on the board or an OHT. Be ready to prompt.

Examples   What sort of incident was it?
Where did it take place?
When did it happen?
Who was involved?
What exactly happened?
Why did it happen?
What was the outcome?
How did the people feel?

2   Give one text to half of the students in the class and the second text to the other half. Within each half, ask the students to work in pairs. They should read their text and make notes to answer the questions. Monitor the class as they do this and check their understanding.

3   Create new pairs with one student who has read text A and one who has read text B. They should compare their notes and add information where necessary. At this point students should have the texts available to check information, vocabulary, etc.

4   Ask students to write up their own article from the notes they have taken. At this point it might be advisable to take the texts away from students so they rely on their own notes to compose the piece.

Comments

The advantage of this kind of activity is that it provides content for students and is thus complementary to activities where they have to generate ideas for themselves. It reflects real-life tasks where writers have to gather information from various sources and create their own text.

Text A
Scouts save woman on beach

Members of a scout group at a summer camp near Whitehead Cliffs helped to save a young woman's life when they carried out a dramatic night-time rescue. Mark Martin spotted the woman lying on the beach in a state of collapse. He hurried back to the campsite and raised the alarm. The scoutmaster and five scouts then set out on a rescue mission, taking blankets and a first-aid kit with them and others went to dial 999.

The group of six scrambled down a steep cliff path in the dark to the unconscious woman. 'We had to do something,' said Mark. 'It was getting very cold and we knew the lifeboat would take a while to get there.' By then a police car had arrived at the top of the cliff and the police contacted the Lifeboat Service by radio.

Soon the lifeboat arrived and two life-boatmen carried the woman out to the boat. She is now recovering in the local hospital. 'I'm so grateful,' she said. 'They saved my life.'

Photocopiable © Oxford University Press

Text B
Woman rescued by scouts

A woman was rescued last night by members of a scout group on holiday in North Devon.

While taking a late walk along the cliffs, Mark Martin heard a dog barking on the beach below. He looked down and saw the body of a woman lying there with a small white dog beside her. The tide was coming in fast. Not knowing whether she was alive or dead, he rushed back to camp and reported what he had seen. The police and lifeboat service were called. Although it was dangerously dark, six scouts set off down a cliff path to help her. She was alive but unconscious and they covered her with blankets.

The lifeboat soon arrived with a paramedic on board and the woman was taken onto the boat on a stretcher. A police car had arrived at the top of the cliff and took the dog to the local vet.

The woman is recovering in hospital. She explained that she had fallen from the path while trying to find her dog and hit her head on a rock. 'Thank goodness Mark heard my dog and saw me,' she said. 'He saved my life.'

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2.14 Reporting interviews

Level Elementary to intermediate

Time 45 minutes +

Aims To encourage generating content for writing through interviews.

Preparation

This activity can be undertaken with or without a model text to demonstrate the kind of report students might write. Step 3 below is therefore optional. If you want to use a text, you need to find or write one which is appropriate for your student group. Many topics lend themselves to the technique of collecting information through interviewing other students.

Examples A sport you have taken up
A holiday you have been on
A hobby you enjoy
A part-time job you do

The following text is an example of what could be prepared for the topic of career plans.

Example Danny Johnson is seventeen years old. He plans to leave school at the end of next year. Danny knows exactly what he wants to do after school. He is going to apply to Birmingham University to study Civil Engineering.

'Why Birmingham?' I asked him.

'It's because I have some old school mates who are studying there,' he said. 'I went to visit them and it seems like a good place. I know it'll be a lot of work. The course lasts for three years and there are lots of exams but I think it's worth it.'

'And why did you choose engineering?'

Danny explained that he's always enjoyed building things. He worked on a school project to build a bridge over a stream in the school grounds. He found the whole project fascinating. Danny is particularly keen to travel. He sees all kinds of opportunities in engineering to build roads, bridges and dams around the world.

Procedure

1 Introduce the topic by asking who in the class already has ideas about a future career and ask them why they are interested in their choice of job. Encourage the class to ask questions of those who volunteer information.

2 Explain to the class that they are going to interview someone about their future career plans. Elicit what they could ask about and the questions they could ask. Build a chart on the board like this:

Age	How old are you?
Job	What kind of job are you interested in? Why?
Training	What type of training do you need for this job?
Length of training	How long is the training?
Travel opportunities	Can you travel in this job?
Salary/wage	What is the starting salary for this job?
Promotion	What are the opportunities for promotion?

Photocopiable © Oxford University Press

3 Read your short model text with the class and use some of the questions above to check comprehension.

4 Ask each student to interview another student in the class, using the questions and making notes. Alternatively, the interview could be done as homework, in which case students can talk to family members or friends.

5 The notes can then be used to write a text.

6 Class work could be displayed with photographs of the people interviewed.

Comments

If the students do the interview at home it does not really matter that they will use their first language. The writing practice itself is in English. Display can be a motivating form of publication; it provides an incentive for clear and imaginative work.

2.15 Conducting a survey

Level Lower-intermediate to advanced

Time 40 minutes in class + out-of-class work

Aims To encourage research for report writing.

This activity gives the students something concrete to research and write about, and has the added advantage of generating certain language functions and forms which can be practised within the context of the activity. The end result of the writing is a report—valuable practice for those who may become involved in report writing in their academic or professional roles. Students formulate a questionnaire, conduct a survey, and write a report based on the results.

The most flexible approach to the activity is to ask students to organize themselves into groups of four or five to select their preferred topic. You can make suggestions but students often have their own ideas for what to research. My own classes have chosen a wide range of topics including:

- The ideal age for a driving licence
- Which party will win the election?
- No right to strike for teachers

- The best eating places in town
- Spare-time activities
- Keeping dogs in urban areas
- Banning cyclists from the roads
- Smoking in public places
- Roles and responsibilities in the family
- Provision of nursery education

Preparation

During the activity it is useful if you can make copies of questionnaires which the students produce. Alternatively, each student could be asked to make several handwritten copies.

Procedure

1 Tell the students that they are going to work in groups to produce a questionnaire on a subject of their own choice or one suggested by you.

2 Choose an example to discuss with the class. Use it to elicit and discuss the kind of information they want to obtain and the questions they would ask. Possible first questions with the topic 'Banning cyclists from the road' might be

Examples   Are you a cyclist or a driver or both?

or

Do you think of yourself mostly as a driver or a cyclist?

Further questions can then be directed at each category, for example, to cyclists:

Examples   How often do you cycle?   Where do you cycle?

What are the main dangers for cyclists?   Is there good provision for cyclists?

What do you think of drivers?

3 Students decide on a topic in their groups, write out their questionnaire, and check it with you. Your role at this stage is to monitor the group work, give advice, and prompt.

4 Groups can then carry out a survey using their questionnaires. If they are in language schools in an English-speaking environment, students can interview host families, local contacts, and people in the street. In non-English-speaking situations, they can interview members of their own class and other classes.

Follow-up

In a follow-up session, groups discuss the information they have managed to collect and write a report of their results, with conclusions. This could be preceded by a presentation from you of the kind of language needed.

Examples

Almost everybody	reported that …
The majority of people	said that …
A minority of people	thought that …
Only a few people	complained that …

Comments

See *Project Work* 2nd edition, in this series, for more survey ideas.

3

Crafting

Introduction

In Chapter 2, 'Composing', we looked at writing from the point of view of 'authoring', in other words, at the process which takes a writer from pre-writing to polishing a final draft for a specific purpose and a particular audience. Successful authoring seems to imply having a sense of purpose, a sense of audience, a sense of direction, and a sense of developing text. However, a focus on authoring need not preclude attention to another, equally important aspect of writing, which could be called 'crafting'. By this we mean the way in which a writer puts together the pieces of the text, developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure.

In order to appreciate the skills needed for successful crafting it is useful to look at finished pieces of writing. Analysing texts will help us to understand a number of things.

- the features that students need to produce when they write
- how one form, in a range of writing forms, differs from another, for example, how a report differs from a memo or how a film review differs from an academic essay
- how one form of writing, such as an academic essay, can vary in organization and development of ideas according to its specific purpose, whether it is to describe a process, discuss an issue, compare two systems, etc.

Analysing written texts

We can analyse the letter on the next page to demonstrate the major features of written texts. Awareness of these features can inform our approach to the design of writing tasks in the classroom. A number of features are worthy of comment.

<div style="border: 1px solid black;">

83 Westbury Crescent
Oxford
OX5 6PD

Pamela Jones
'My View'
76 Station Road
Milton
MT3 8AR

August 4th

Dear Pamela,

1   You asked readers for comments on your new magazine, so here are mine.
2   I was very impressed with the first issue. My husband was too. It is so
3   refreshing to read a magazine without articles on sex or items about crime
4   and bad behaviour. Some other magazines provide nothing more than gossip
5   about wealthy or famous people. I really enjoyed 'My View' because it was
6   about ordinary people and took a positive perspective on life. It is in good
7   taste and is full of common sense. The illustrations are attractive and
8   cheerful. They are very pleasing to the eye.

9   I have one criticism to make. While the pictures are attractive, some of the
10 articles are difficult to read. This is because they are printed on dark
11 coloured backgrounds, like the one on page 28 called 'Time to dream'.

12 But I shall certainly buy your publication again and, when I've finished
13 with it, I will make sure it goes to my doctor's surgery for others to enjoy while
14 they wait.

Yours sincerely
Doreen Parker

</div>

1   Form

The immediately noticeable feature is its layout, which relates to the conventions of letter writing. Different forms of writing may have distinctive formats, for example agendas, minutes, reports, formal letters, and teaching these forms may be one element of a writing course.

2   Discourse organization

If we look beyond the form of the letter we can see that its function is to give an informal review and this determines how the content is organized into one paragraph of positive comment, one paragraph of reservations, and a concluding paragraph. Longer and more formal texts may have more complex structures. Classroom writing tasks can make explicit reference to patterns of discourse organization and develop students' understanding of how they can be successfully achieved.

3 Paragraph structure

Effective writing usually has a clear paragraph plan, each paragraph with a topic sentence leading into supporting statements which develop the topic. For example, the topic sentence, 'I was very impressed with the first issue' leads into more detailed comments. In *English for Science and Technology: A Discourse Approach*, Trimble (1985) makes a distinction between the conceptual paragraph and the physical paragraph which is helpful to EFL students. By conceptual paragraph he means all the information presented by the writer to develop a particular point, idea, or generalization. However, the conceptual paragraph may be realized in several physical paragraphs. For example, had this letter been more detailed in its review, it might have contained a paragraph commenting on content and one commenting on design instead of presenting them together.

4 Cohesive devices

Cohesive devices are the means by which parts of a text are linked as logically related sequences. They signal the relationship between ideas in such a way that the writer's intentions are made clear. They make obvious the developing thread of meaning which the writer is trying to communicate and often help us to anticipate what is coming next. In *Cohesion in English*, Halliday and Hasan (1976) identify a number of cohesive devices which can be seen in the letter:

Reference

A common way of linking ideas across sentences is through back reference by using, for example, *it*, *this*, *he* or *she*. Pronouns and demonstratives are the most common reference words. They may refer to an individual concept, as with 'it' in line 5, or to part of a previous sentence, as with 'This' in line 10.

Conjunction

Classifying conjunctions is not easy as many have grammatical as well as logical functions. They not only link parts of the text but also clarify the logical nature of the connection, for example, addition or comparison. It might be helpful to students to make this distinction clear through an initial classification like this:

- co-ordinating conjunctions such as *and* on line 6, which link independent clauses
- subordinating conjunctions like *because* on line 5 which link a subordinate clause to a main clause
- conjunctive adverbs like *while* on line 9 which indicate logical relationships such as addition, contrast, cause and effect, or opposition.

Classifying in this way enables students to become aware of restrictions of sentence structure and punctuation on conjunctions. For example, *in addition* usually comes at the beginning of a sentence and is followed by a comma; *too* usually comes at the end, as in the second sentence of the letter.

A second stage of teaching could then involve classifying the cohesive links according to function: *and*, *too*, *as well as*, *in addition* are all to do with the function of addition. Many materials now give lists of these cohesive links but what students need is thorough practice in using them effectively in the context of writing texts.

Substitution

Sometimes a word or phrase substitutes for an earlier item in the text in order to avoid repetition. This can be seen in line 1 where *mine* substitutes for *my comments*.

Ellipsis

This refers to the omission of words and phrases. For example, on the second line of the letter *was too* can only be understood if we refer back to the full form in the previous sentence, *was very impressed*.

Lexical relationships

Another aspect of the letter is the writer's use of vocabulary to create the desired positive effect, especially through the flow of adjectives, *impressed*, *refreshing*, *positive*, *attractive*, *cheerful*, *pleasing*.

It is clear from these examples that successful crafting requires the skills of organizing sentences into paragraphs, using cohesive devices, punctuating meaningfully, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and organizing ideas into a coherent piece of discourse.

Problem areas for students

English language learners have problems in many of these areas. Some are clearly to do with the unfamiliarity of the language itself. The obvious example, which often leaps out from the page, is uncertainty about grammar. Other problems, though, are to do with the features above. For example:

- Students may use an unclear cohesive tie, as in these instructions given by a Swedish pharmacist for the use of a medicine:

    Three times daily for seven days only, except the condition deteriorates.

Many native speakers would interpret *except* as meaning *unless*, when the intended meaning was *otherwise* and prefaced a warning.

- Students may use an appropriate cohesive tie but not realize their syntactic constraints and place them wrongly in a sentence, overuse them, or fail to use the correct punctuation. This student has fallen into all three traps:

    People who live in the country, whereas, have a pleasant environment. On the contrary, town dwellers suffer from noise and furthermore cramped conditions.

- Paragraphing is another potential problem area. A student's work may consist of long strings of sentences with no natural breaks so that it is difficult to see topic sentences and supporting statements.

They need encouragement to break their ideas into simple propositions which can then be built into more complex sentences.

- There is also the problem of words. One of my intermediate students summed it up so well when she described her reasons for coming to class:

> People tell me my English is good but they don't realize I use the same words all the time. I need more words and more ways of putting them together.

Chapter 2, 'Composing', contains activities which help students to generate vocabulary for writing. Vocabulary is also a focus in this chapter. Some students need a good deal of help in developing a range of vocabulary. As ideas are generated for writing, students need to select appropriate vocabulary with which to express those ideas. Teachers can help by eliciting or pre-teaching key vocabulary in a variety of ways. But there is also room for building vocabulary work into the design of writing activities, as can be seen in this chapter.

How can the teacher help students develop crafting skills?

The question that arises from looking at written texts and the problems that students have in relation to their various features is this: What is the role of the teacher in helping students to produce coherent and cohesive pieces of writing? In other words:

- Can teaching help?
- Can the teacher speed up the process of writing development by presenting models for analysis?
- Is it useful for teachers, in devising activities, to use some of the metalanguage of linguistic analysis, and raise students' understanding of how texts are put together?

The choice and design of tasks in this chapter imply a qualified 'yes' to all of these questions. The qualifications can be listed as follows:

1 Teachers who encourage students to read in English do them a great service. It appears to be the case that good writers, who may not necessarily have had any formal instruction about discourse types, start writing with appropriate 'schemata' in their heads. They can, for example, make an effective plan for describing a system of some kind. This ability has built up through reading and inferring the structures of texts. So, as well as doing tasks to practise aspects of textual structure, students can also gain considerable insight from reading published and peer-group writing.

2   Controlled tasks which focus on one or more aspects of written discourse should be balanced by freer writing activities, even from the early stages. Students need to exploit the language resources they have, to see what they can do, to progress towards autonomy. The activities in this chapter are divided into two sections. The first section contains activities which guide content and global organization of texts. The second section contains activities which guide the details of language such as the use of connectives or sentence structure. All of them, however, are appropriate to specific aims.

3   The most effective way of helping students to produce coherent and cohesive writing is to offer practice at the text level, that is, to encourage the writing of whole texts. Activities which encourage the putting together of sentences out of context are not as useful as those which take a whole text as a frame and develop practice within it. If the context of the writing is clearly established, all the devices in focus can be practised in a meaningful way. For this reason, all the activities in this chapter involve practice in the context of complete pieces of communication.

Types of writing

A final question needs to be asked: What kinds of texts do we ask our students to write? The answer to that depends largely on their reasons for learning English and, in particular, for writing in English. Writing is a relatively rare activity outside the professional world so the English language teacher needs to think carefully about the role of writing in the classroom and the demands made on students.

A typology of types of writing could include six categories:

Personal writing is writing for oneself and includes various types of aide-memoires, as well as diaries and journals. These writing activities would normally be carried out in the first language but there may be good motivational reasons for using them in the English-language classroom. As we saw in Chapter 2, 'Composing', keeping journals of various kinds can provide valuable practice opportunities.

Study writing is writing for academic or educational purposes and includes all those tasks that students perform, either writing notes and summaries for themselves or writing essays, reports, reviews, etc, which are read and often assessed by teachers.

Public writing is writing as a member of the general public to organizations or institutions. There are usually conventions to follow in the writing. It includes such activities as writing letters of enquiry, application, and complaint, letters to the editor, and form filling of various kinds.

Creative writing can include poems, stories, rhymes, drama, all of which can be for oneself or shared with others. It is often found in primary and lower secondary classrooms in first language education as it has the values of helping personal and social development, and

building self-esteem. Some teachers report great success with creative writing in adult classes too, but care is needed about appropriateness with particular groups.

Social writing is all the writing that establishes and maintains social relationships with family and friends, for example, personal letters, invitations, notes with congratulations, condolences, telephone text messages, and personal emails. These will be relevant to EFL students who need to learn the correct formats and formulae.

Institutional writing relates to professional roles. It may well be possible to draw up a core list of this type of writing, for example, agendas, minutes, reports, memos. However, each profession will have its own specialized texts such as legal contracts, advertising copy, or academic papers. Language students in more specialized groups can usually draw up specifications of their own needs in writing English and provide authentic examples.

When designing a writing programme for a group of students, it is sensible to draw up a checklist of writing relevant to the group or even to have an elaborated list, such as the one below, from which to select items.

Types of writing

Personal writing	Public writing	Creative writing
diaries journals shopping lists reminders for oneself packing lists recipes	letters of —enquiry —complaint —request form filling applications (for memberships)	poems stories rhymes drama songs autobiography
Social writing	**Study writing**	**Institutional writing**
letters invitations notes —of condolence —of thanks —of congratulations emails telephone messages instructions —to friends —to family	making notes while reading taking notes from lectures making a card index summaries synopses reviews reports of —experiments —workshops —visits essays bibliographies	agendas posters minutes instructions memoranda speeches reports applications reviews curriculum vitae contracts specifications business letters note-making public notices (doctors advertisements and other emails professionals)

Because of the assessment procedures which exist in most educational systems and the nature of English-language examinations, our students usually have to develop skills in writing compositions. It can therefore be useful to move beyond forms of writing, such as letters and reports, to functions of writing. It is possible to structure a writing course according to various functions

of discourse, for example, description, review, narrative, argument. Aided by the work of text linguists, language teachers have come to recognize a number of text types, within which the presentation of ideas follows distinctive patterns, for example, process description or contrast and comparison. Clearly it is useful to make these distinctions if we want to help students to understand the different patterns they exhibit. One particular type may form the teaching focus for a lesson, as many of the activities in this chapter demonstrate. Look at the tasks below and try them out for yourself. They are typical of those found in many current coursebooks.

Task one Transfer information in the text to the diagram below to provide a classification of world diseases.

There are three major types of disease in the world and they have different effects according to whether a country is developed or developing. For example, a child born in an affluent nation is ten times as likely to reach the age of one year as a child born in a developing country. The first type of disease consists of directly transmissible diseases such as typhoid. The most widespread of these originate from inadequate sanitation. Diarrhoea kills six million children in developing countries every year. The second type consists of vector-borne diseases. These are transmitted via an insect or other animal known as a vector. The most common of these is malaria, which is carried by a mosquito. The third type consists of non-contagious diseases and these are most prevalent in developed countries. For example, heart disease is responsible for more deaths than any other non-contagious disease.

World diseases

| Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
Example	Example	Example
_____	_____	_____

Task two 1 Look at the shape of this geography text. The information can be divided into five sections. Check that you understand the meaning of each term by matching it with its correct definition, like this:

| Term	In other words
landscape	animals, birds, insects, etc.
climate	plants, trees. etc.
vegetation	rainfall, snow, temperature, etc.
wildlife	farming
agriculture	rocks, hills, rivers, etc.

2 Now read the text and label each part correctly.

introduction >
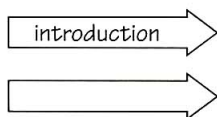
> The map of central Australia shows thousands of square miles of nothing. Small towns with names like Narwietooma and Yuendumu are linked by a few lonely roads. It is often called the *Red Centre* of Australia because of the red hills. The most famous red rock is Ayers Rock, which is 1000 feet high. It is about 200 miles south west of Alice Springs.
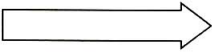
Although it is dry, the desert is not dead. Rain does not often fall but when it comes it arrives suddenly and floods the dry river beds. Some years there may be no rain but others there may be twenty inches. There are springs and water-holes too. Water-holes are holes in hard rock which may go deep underground and which fill up with water when the rain comes. Nights can be cold, especially in July and August, which are the winter months in Australia, but even then the days can be very hot.
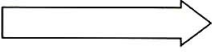
The desert is covered in unfamiliar plants. Spinifex grass grows everywhere and there are trees in Palm Valley and around the springs. There is animal life in the desert too: flying foxes, wallabies, wombats and dingos live in the valleys; snakes and lizards hide in the rocks; fireflies glow in the night; and colourful birds nest around the water-holes.
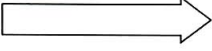
Alice Springs is the centre for the cattle stations of central Australia. These are huge. They cover hundreds of square miles ...

One issue for the teacher to consider is how to integrate the teaching of the various skills required for successful crafting. It is possible to work out a programme of activities, specifying function, form, focus, and context. An early task in such a programme could be:

Function	Form	Focus	Context
Description of a scene	One paragraph extract from a letter	Selection of content: topic focus, logical development of ideas	Describing the scene around you as you write a letter home

A later task might be:

Function	Form	Focus	Context
Narrative	A letter reporting a family event	Paragraphing	Reporting the sequence of events at a wedding

And later:

Function	Form	Focus	Context
Comparison	A letter	Cohesive devices used for contrast and comparison	Advising a friend on the better of two holiday alternatives

Contexts are not always easy to create, especially for school students whose future needs for English are unpredictable. And sometimes it is advisable to set writing activities in preparation for examinations in which contexts will not be given and students will need to create their own.

In *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language*, Rivers and Temperley (1978) provide a timelessly useful idea for planning a series of writing tasks within a global context such as a family or a region. Students can prepare different types of writing—descriptions, biographies, reports, discussions, and newspaper articles—on the Fielding family or a portfolio on the province of Westland. Students invent an imaginary setting and this generates ideas for many writing tasks within a simulated context.

Some of the activities on the following pages have a reading as well as a writing focus. They show how textual analysis can help writers appreciate what makes a successful product in terms of such aspects as linking ideas within and across sentences or in terms of global organization of texts. Other activities involve students in substantial pieces of writing and practise the use of connectives, how to develop a sequence of ideas, or how to organize discourse according to its function. The emphasis throughout is on the types of writing required by students in study or institutional writing, public writing, or that required by examinations. Other types of writing, such as business letters, are not dealt with here but can be found in a variety of supplementary coursebooks.

3.1 Describing a person

Level Elementary

Time 40–50 minutes

Aims To organize content for an informal description of a person in a letter to a friend.

Preparation

You will need to make copies of Worksheet 3.1. Alternatively, you could create your own text and make a set of pictures (enough for pair work), like the ones below.

Procedure

1 Ask students individually to think about a person they like and write five sentences about him or her.

2 Ask students to read the text about Mick and find the words that describe his looks, clothes, and personality. Working in pairs, they should complete the chart with these words.

3 Put students into small groups. Ask them to read out their five sentences from step 1 to each other and add any further language to the chart.

4 Ask students to look at the notes about Penny and then make similar notes about Kevin.

5 Use the sentences in the text about Mick to help students make sentences about Penny and Kevin.

Examples She's quite short and slim with short, dark, wavy hair, and brown eyes.
She likes wearing simple clothes.
She's a lively and talkative person.

6 Then ask students to write a similar paragraph about someone in the class. When they have finished, ask some students to read their paragraphs aloud and see if the class can identify the person.
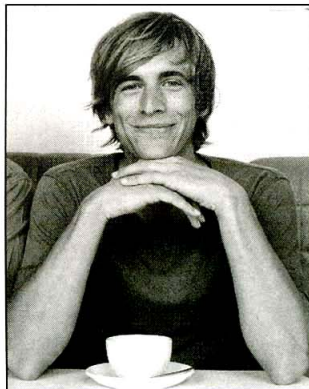
Worksheet 3.1
Describing a person
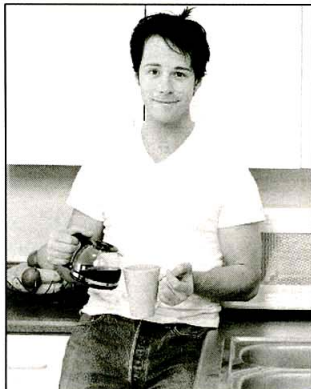
Mick   Penny   Kevin

Mick's very tall and quite slim, with very short brown hair and brown eyes.
He usually wears casual clothes. He likes wearing jeans and a leather jacket. He's a serious person, quiet and gentle, but sometimes he's very funny. Everyone likes him because he's so kind.

	Looks	Clothes	Personality
Mick			
Penny	quite short, slim, short dark hair, brown eyes	simple tops and trousers	lively, talkative, kind
Kevin			

Photocopiable © Oxford University Press

Acknowledgement
This idea comes from *Pen to Paper* by Tricia Hedge (Nelson).

3.2 Writing a biography

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 40–50 minutes

Aims To select and organize content for a biography.

Preparation

Make a copy of worksheet 3.2 for each student. Alternatively, make enough copies for students to work in pairs and cut up the headings and questions of task 1 into separate pieces of paper. Put each set into an envelope so that students have a sorting activity. If the worksheet is copied onto thick card, this will make a more permanent resource.

Procedure

1 Write the word 'biography' on the board and ask students to explain what it means. Then ask if anyone has read a biography recently or tell them about one you have read.

2 Introduce the idea of what might go into a biography by writing the word 'birthplace' on the board. Ask students what other information they would expect to find in a biography, and add more headings to the board.

3 Give out the envelopes or the worksheet and ask students to work in pairs to match the headings and questions in task 1.

4 Ask students if they wish to add any other headings or questions (task 2).

5 Discuss with the class whether or not there is a logical order of information in a biography (task 3).

6 Refer students to task 4, which has notes about the life of Mother Teresa. Ask students to match these notes to the headings and decide on an order for a biography. They should then work in pairs to expand the notes into a short account.

7 Ask students to choose a famous person and find out as much as possible about him or her for homework. They should then use their findings to write a biography for the class magazine or school website.

Worksheet 3.2

Writing a biography

1 This is information we might expect to find in the biography of a famous person. How quickly can you put together the headings and questions? Work in pairs.

DATES		Why do people remember him or her?
EDUCATION		Where was he or she born?
BIRTHPLACE		What sort of person was he or she?
ACHIEVEMENTS		Did he or she set out to do certain things in life?
PERSONALITY		How did his or her education influence his or her outlook on life?
BELIEFS		What did he or she achieve in life?
REASON FOR FAME		When was he or she born?
AIMS		What did he or she believe was important in life?

2 Would you add any other headings and questions?

3 If you were writing a biography, which information would you give first, second, third? Is there a logical progression?

4 Look at these notes about Mother Teresa. Match each one with the headings in task 1. Then decide on a logical order and write a short biography of Mother Teresa.

a *remembered by millions of people as saint for hard work, faith, commitment to poor people*

b *born August 26th 1910, youngest child of Albanian grocer*

c *opened a home for the poor in Calcutta, later a home for abandoned children, also a colony for lepers*

d *when 18 studied English in Dublin with Irish sisters of Loreto*

e *believed God wanted her to work among sick and needy*

f *tiny, frail, but outspoken woman*

g *born in Skopje, Yugoslavia*

h *wanted to found an order of nuns, established the Order of the Missionaries of Charity 1950*

3.3 Developing an argument

Level Advanced

Time 60 minutes +

Aims To organize a set of arguments into a structure of statement, point, and evidence.

Preparation

You will need to prepare a set of arguments that would be relevant to an argumentative essay and think about how you would justify them. The topic chosen here is 'Childhood is the best time of your life'. More specifically, you need a set of statements to put on the board or OHT. For this topic possible statements are:

Examples This statement has never been true for all children.
Even in wealthy countries children have to cope with pressures.
Media influence means that childhood is no longer a time of innocence.
Children in poorer countries rarely have easy childhoods.
Child abuse is a widespread problem.

Procedure

1 Write 'Childhood is the best time of your life' on the board and ask students whether they agree or disagree. Ask them to justify their opinions.

2 Then ask students to focus on arguments against the statement. As you elicit their opinions, try to turn them into statements on the board. Use your own prepared statements, too, so that you end up with a detailed set.

3 Ask students to work in pairs to turn each statement into a more detailed argument about childhood. Then elicit their ideas. You may get something like this:

Examples This statement has never been true for all children: some children have to cope with pain and suffering from childhood illness; some have disabilities; some experience bullying at school.

Even in wealthy countries, children have to cope with pressures: parental pressure to do well; pressure from teachers to pass examinations; peer pressure to conform to the group.

4 Show students how they can turn the statements into a series of arguments by following the pattern in the table on the next page.

5 Ask students in pairs to construct paragraphs for each statement in this way. They should make the statement clear, elaborate it into a point, and provide evidence to back it up.

6 When they have finished a first draft, each pair should exchange their draft with another pair for comment before working on improvements.

Topic	Children in poorer countries rarely have easy childhoods.
Point	In many parts of the world, children are ill or starving because of poor living conditions, drought, famine, unclean water, or a poor national economy.
Evidence	For example, in developing countries children often become malnourished after a bout of gastroenteritis, caused by impure food or water. The resulting malnutrition weakens the body's defences against other diseases such as measles, which can cause long-lasting health problems.

3.4 Organizing a contrast and comparison essay

Level Upper-intermediate to advanced

Time 50 minutes +

Aims To organize points in a contrast and comparison essay.

Preparation

The topic chosen for the essay here is 'Continuous assessment is a more effective way of assessing students' progress than timed written examinations'. You may wish to prepare the content needed for the essay as a list of points about continuous assessment and timed written examinations. The worksheet below does this. Make copies of the sheet for students. It can be used for a matching and sorting activity during the lesson.

Procedure

1 Give students the title for the essay and explain that the audience is an examiner. They are to prepare a formal academic composition.

2 Ask students to work individually for a few minutes, jotting down ideas for the composition in the form of a mind map. You could start one together on the board, using the mind map below if students are unfamiliar with the technique.

3 Elicit suggestions for content from the class and add them to the mind map on the board.

4 Give out your list of points (this is a linear equivalent of the mind map.) Ask students to add any new points from the board.

students less stressed — **continuous assessment** — students can work at their own speed — heavy marking load for teachers

too much of a memory test — **timed written exams** — students get nervous — exams can have a negative feedback on teaching
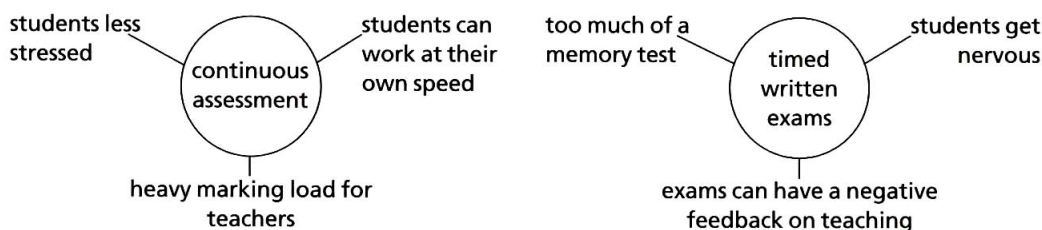
Worksheet 3.4

Contrast and comparison

1 Read these opening sentences of an essay.

In higher education there are generally two methods of testing a student's progress. On the one hand, a student may be asked to write periodic assignments or essays for continuous assessment. On the other hand, success or failure may depend on passing timed written examinations.

2 Below is a possible list of content for the essay. Match points which are about the same topic by joining them with an arrow. Find labels for the topics, e.g. time.

Continuous assessment	**Timed written examinations**
Students can think and write at their own speed.	They give teachers a quick and easy marking load.
The results show true ability and not just good memory.	A focus on exams can have a negative effect on teaching and learning.
Students are less likely to become stressed.	Exam scripts are numbered not named so marking is objective and reliable.
Teachers have more time to 'educate' as less time is spent on preparing for exams.	They test how well people can work under pressure of time.
Teachers have a time-consuming marking load.	Students can get poor results because of nervousness.
It is more realistic in relation to real-life events where people have time and resources to write.	They are unrealistic in that people have time and resources for writing in real life.
Assessment by teachers can be subjective.	Students with good memories tend to do better.

3 Now decide on a sensible order for the topics and write your essay according to the plan below.
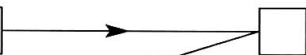
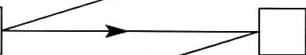**Continuous assessment**   **Timed written examinations**

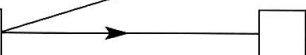Topic 1 (e.g. time) — Topic 1

Topic 2 — Topic 2

Topic 3 — Topic 3

Topic 4 — Topic 4

Topic 5 — Topic 5

5 Then ask students to match points from each column which relate to the same topic (as shown by the arrows in the list). This can be done individually or in pairs.

6 Check the matching task with the whole task and discuss labels for the topics which have been identified, for example, time, fairness, marking load. Working with the class, decide on a sensible order for the topics. Suggest they look back at their mind maps and see if links between topics suggest an order.

7 Then show students a possible organization for their composition. As this essay involves a number of topics, an 'interwoven' organization is appropriate, as in the diagram on the worksheet.

3.5 Writing a book review

Level Elementary to advanced

Time 50 minutes +

Aims To select categories of content and organize ideas for a book review.

This activity can be started at the elementary level if your learners are borrowing books from a class library. You can provide an audience for the writing by displaying reviews in the classroom as recommendations for other students.

Preparation

Put together materials from any well-known graded reader available to your students and make a collage on the wall or in the book corner. The collage could include the front cover; the back cover blurb; information from the title page; an extract from the publisher's catalogue; an extract from the opening of the story. See below for an example of a collage for *Phantom of the Opera*, from the Oxford Bookworms series.

Procedure

1 Ask students to work in pairs and tell each other a little about a book they have recently read and enjoyed.

2 Bring the class together and ask a few students to say why they liked a particular book.

3 Write the title *Phantom of the Opera* on the board. Ask students if they have heard of it and what they know about it. What kind of story is it?

4 Then ask students to read the beginning of the story. How could they summarize it to give prospective readers an idea of the story?

5 Ask them to write a short paragraph summarizing the opening events. As they write, encourage students to look at each other's work. They might begin like this:

Example The story begins one day in 1880 in the dancers' dressing room of the Opera House in Paris. One of the dancers ran in, with a white face, and said she had seen the ghost ...

6 Ask the class for suggestions about what might be included in a review. Build up a list of categories like the one shown in the list below.

7 Then ask students to write a review of a book they have read recently. The list of questions to guide the review can be put up on permanent display in the classroom.

8 Reviews can be 'published' by asking students to read them aloud as recommendations for the book or by displaying them on the wall. Alternatively, reviews could be published on a school website.

Writing a book review

Title:	What is the title of the book?
Author:	Who wrote it?
Type:	Is it a detective story, thriller, horror story, historical novel, science fiction, romance, etc?
Subject:	What is it about? Family life, an unusual person, a mystery, an adventure, etc?
Characters:	Who are they? What are they like?
Setting:	Where does the story take place?
Time:	Is it written in the present time, in the past, or in the future?
Events:	What happens? (Don't tell the whole story, just enough to interest your readers.)
Ideas:	Is the writer saying something important about people? Is there a 'message' in the story?
Comments:	How would you describe the story? Amusing? Exciting? Fast-moving? Sad? Did you like it? What especially did you like? How did you feel? Happy? Sad?

Stage 1

Do you believe in ghosts? Of course not. We like to talk about ghosts, and to tell stories about them, but we don't really believe in them … Do we?

In the Paris Opera House in 1880, strange things are happening. One of the dancers sees a shadow in a dark passage. It comes through a wall in front of her, and its face has no eyes. One of the stage workers sees a man in a black evening coat, but he has the head of a dead man, with a yellow face and no nose. People hear a voice in another room, but the room is empty.

It is the Phantom of the Opera …
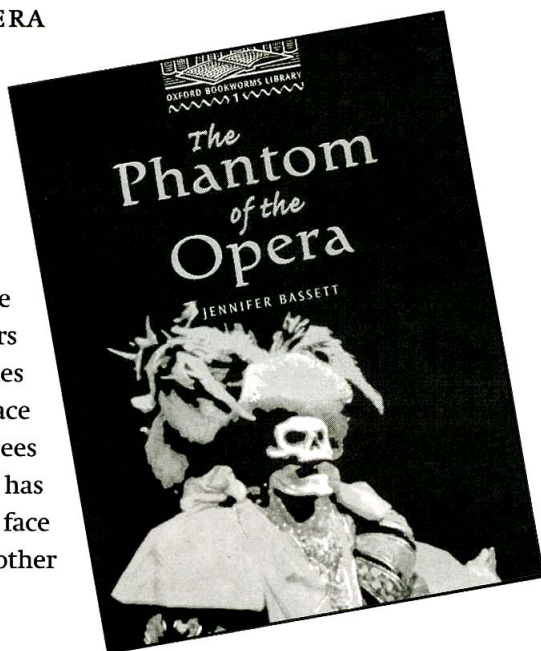
Jennifer Bassett, the author of this story about the Phantom, is an experienced teacher and writer. She lives and works in Devonshire, in the south west of England.

'Quick! Quick! Close the door! It's him!' Annie Sorelli ran into the dressing-room, her face white.

One of the girls ran and closed the door, and then they all turned to Annie Sorelli.

'Who? Where? What's the matter?' they cried.

'It's the ghost!' Annie said. 'In the passage. I saw him. He came through the wall in front of me! And … and I saw his face!'

Most of the girls were afraid, but one of them, a tall girl with black hair, laughed.

'Pooh!' she said. 'Everybody says they see the Opera ghost, but there isn't really a ghost. You saw a shadow on the wall.' But she did not open the door, or look into the passage.

'Lots of people see him,' a second girl said. 'Joseph Buquet saw him two days ago. Don't you remember?'

Then all the girls began to talk at once.

'Joseph says the ghost is tall and he wears a black evening coat.'

'He has the head of a dead man, with a yellow face and no nose …'

'… And no eyes—only black holes!'

Then little Meg Giry spoke for the first time. 'Don't talk about him. He doesn't like it. My mother told me.'

'Your mother?' the girl with black hair said. 'What does your mother know about the ghost?'

3.6 Writing instructions

Level Lower-intermediate to advanced

Time 40 minutes +

Aims To give warnings using imperatives in a public notice.

Preparation

The topic chosen here is a public notice about a wildfire. Find a picture which shows a wildfire, similar to the one on page 101. Make a copy of the worksheet for each student or a copy for each small group.

Procedure

1 Ask students to look at the picture first and say what it shows. They may have different words to describe the phenomenon. Ask how many students have experienced a wildfire and if they can retell any experiences.

2 Explain to students that they are going to write a public warning poster. See if they can make a few suggestions and write some on the board to show the different forms that are possible. Choose the forms to suit the level of your students.

Examples Close all windows and doors.
Don't stay near exterior walls.
Make sure your car is ready to drive away.
Leave your home as soon as you are advised to.

3 Ask students to think of general advice, particular advice during the fire season, and what to do if you can't escape from your home. (See Worksheet 3.6.) Ask students to work in groups so that they can pool ideas. Give the incomplete poster to students to prompt ideas and be ready with some prompts of your own.

Examples If you live in a high risk area

- Protect your house with a foam protection system.
- Keep a ten-metre area clear of vegetation around your house.
- Don't plant trees near your house.
- Grow moisture-retaining vegetation in your garden.

When the weather is dangerously dry

- Listen regularly to the local TV or radio news.
- Be alert about all causes of fire, e.g. broken glass in dry grass.
- Keep your eyes open for any sign of fire.
- Make sure you know all possible escape routes to safe areas.
- Have transport ready at all times.
- Have ready any important documents or valuables.

If you are caught in a fire and can't escape from your house

- Pull the blinds down to protect against intense heat.
- Stay in the centre of your house, away from exterior walls.
- Keep low down near the floor where the good air is.

Worksheet 3.6

PUBLIC NOTICE
Wildfire

Keep your radio or TV on. Listen to the latest weather report to save your life.

If you live in a high-risk area

- Protect your house with a protection system.
- Make sure you can tune in to your local radio station.

_____

_____

_____

_____

When the weather is dangerously dry

- Keep your eyes open for any sign of fire.
- Listen regularly to your local weather forecast.

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you are caught in a fire and can't escape from your house

- Go inside your house.
- Close all doors and windows.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4 When groups have completed the task, ask them to read out their warnings to see if other groups understand them.

Follow-up

A useful follow-up task is to ask individual students to devise a similar poster for another hazard which occurs in their own country, for example, hurricane, flood, or earthquake. If students have access to the Internet, they could use it to look for useful information.

3.7 Developing a cause and effect argument

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 50 minutes +

Aims To organize ideas in a leaflet explaining effects, using appropriate logical connectives.

This activity uses the technique of making mind maps which is described in Chapter 2, 'Composing' on page 56. The topic of drug addiction is controversial and may not be acceptable in some cultures but there may be another social issue which fits the context of a leaflet for schoolchildren and the procedure set out below.

Preparation

The topic for this activity is drug addiction. It's a good idea to prepare a mind map for yourself before class so that you can prompt students if they run out of ideas.

Procedure

1 You could warm up to the topic in one of several ways:
—ask students what they feel are the greatest dangers facing young people nowadays.
—refer to a national or local event in the news which relates to drug abuse.
—refer to something you have read about information leaflets used in school to alert children to the danger of drug addiction.

2 Explain to students that they are going to write part of an information leaflet for young people warning against the use of drugs. Read the opening lines from one such brochure.

Example Drug addicts are people who become 'hooked' on hard drugs and cannot stop taking them. Plenty of drug addicts have said that if they had known the whole story from the beginning they would not have started. Would you open a doctor's bag and experiment by taking some of the pills you found in it? You are not likely to be so stupid. So why take drugs? Life for a drug addict is very hard.

Tell students they are going to finish the extract by describing the effects of drug addiction. Ask them individually to make a mind map of all the effects they can think of. Give them a few minutes to do this.

3 Then elicit ideas from the class and build a mind map on the board. It could look something like this:

4 Continue the process of gathering ideas by spending some time listing useful language on the board.

Examples
- How many phrases can you make including 'drug'? (addict, addiction, taking, dependency, dealer)
- What kind of behaviour might a drug addict display? (moody, violent, unpredictable)
- What sort of problems can a drug addict experience? (health, family, social, emotional)
- What adjectives can describe the consequences of drug addiction? (unhappy, sad, tragic, serious, fatal)

5 Take one example of an effect and show the different ways in which it can be expressed.

Example Drug addicts can become very moody and sometimes violent.

This can lead to the break-up of families.
One effect of this can be the break-up of families.
… as a result of which families can break up.
… with the result that families can break up.
As a consequence, families can break up.

6 Ask students to work in small groups to complete the brochure, discussing the sentences they are going to write and checking with other groups.

Comments

Asking students to work in small groups on a short, well-defined writing task has the advantage of ensuring that students check and improve their sentences, discussing word order and accuracy. It enables weaker students to experience more successful writing and to feel they have contributed. It allows the teacher to monitor and give help as there are fewer pieces of writing in progress.

3.8 Organizing a classification

Level Upper-intermediate to advanced

Time 30–40 minutes in class + out-of-class work

Aims To develop an understanding of the organization of a formal scientific classification.

The following activity uses the well-established technique of information transfer, in this case transferring information from a prose text to a diagram which represents the information content of the text. It is a particularly useful technique with texts that have the major function of classifying, as it is relatively easy to devise a diagram which indicates criteria for classification, resulting categories, and examples within those categories. It is a reading activity which helps students to see how such a text is organized, and provides them with an understanding of discourse structure which will enable them to write their own classifications appropriately.

Preparation

You can use any text which contains a classification and is appropriate to the level of the students. You will need one copy of the text for each student. The diagram can be copied or drawn on the board. The text here is about taking vitamins.

Procedure

1 A useful warm-up to the topic knowledge contained in the text is to ask students if any of them take vitamins or if family members or friends take vitamins. Then ask them what kinds of people may take extra vitamins. This can be undertaken as class work with you asking questions and eliciting information, or as pair work, with the following questions written on the board:

Example Do you take vitamins? Why or why not? What kinds of people need to take vitamins?

2 If this is the first time your students have done this kind of information transfer activity, ask them to skim through the text and decide what sort of text it is—comparison and contrast, process description, classification, etc.

3 Give out Worksheet 3.8 and ask the students to find the information they need to fill in the two blank boxes beside 'level of potency of vitamin supplementation' in the bottom left corner of the diagram, labelled '1st category' and '2nd category'. Check answers with the whole class after a minute.

4 Then ask students to work quietly and find the information they need to complete the diagram. Encourage them to check with each other as they work.

Worksheet 3.8

Read the text and complete the figure below

Taking vitamins

This is a controversial topic for both ordinary people and the medical profession. Do we need vitamin supplements and if so, why? To what extent do we take them? We can divide vitamin supplementation into three simple categories, each of which needs a different level of potency.

We know that modern food processing reduces vitamin content and over-cooking reduces it further. Anyone who eats a lot of processed food may suffer from vitamin deficiency and need to take supplements. So, too, may elderly people who do not have a proper diet. There are also some sections of the population which have lower social and economic status and may not be able to afford a good diet. All of these people may benefit from a general, all-round supplementation of vitamins to ensure the minimum daily requirement.

The second category of vitamin supplementation may be needed by people whose life-styles increase their need for certain vitamins. For example, people who work under stressful conditions may need more vitamin B. The habits of smoking and drinking rob the body of certain vitamins. Such cases may need up to five times the recommended daily intake. In addition, many medicinal drugs can reduce absorption of vitamins or cause them to be excreted in abnormal quantities, for example, antibiotics, aspirin, and the contraceptive pill.

The third category of supplementation is administration of doses of 10–100 times the recommended amount. This is called the 'therapeutic' use of vitamins and is a matter of great controversy. It does appear to be the case, however, that complaints such as heart and blood disease, respiratory infections, and skin complaints all benefit from large intakes of certain vitamins.
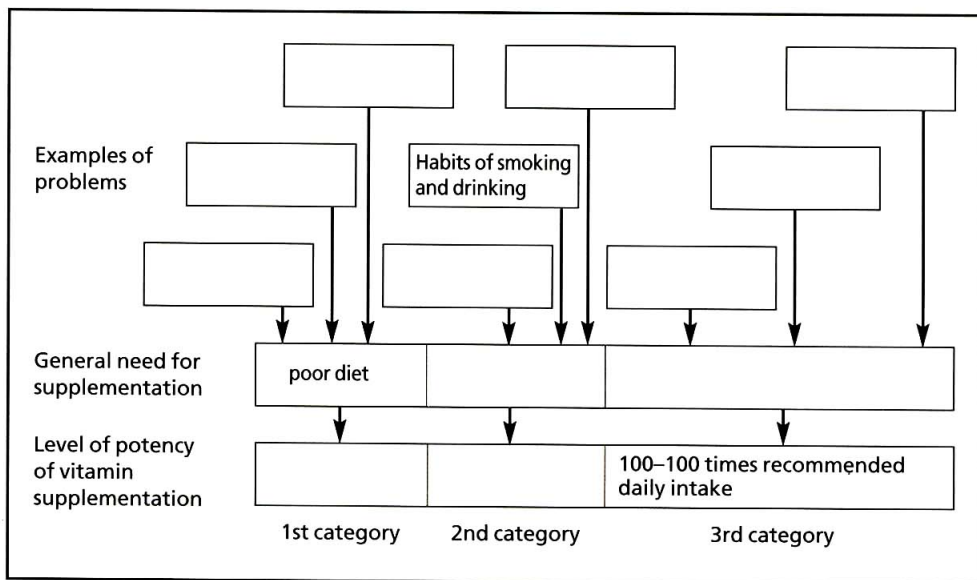
5 Ask students to write a classification for homework. Remind them that they will need to:
—say what the categories are
—explain the basis of the division into categories
—describe each category
—give an example to demonstrate each category.

If your students are learning to write in English for educational purposes, encourage them to think of a topic within their own subject area. Education students could classify types of school, engineers could classify types of metal, environmentalists could classify types of pollution, etc.

3.9 Using connectives of addition

Level **Intermediate**
Time **40–50 minutes in class + out-of-class work**
Aims **To elaborate an argument using connectives of addition.**

This activity attempts to demonstrate the point made in the introduction to this chapter, that as students learn conjunctions, they need to be aware of their grammatical restrictions. I have deliberately taken addition as the example, as many teachers assume this is an easy area; students, however, have problems with the position of 'also' and 'as well as'.

Preparation

You need to make copies of the text and Worksheet 3.9 which present connectives of addition and the grammatical constraints on them. The topic chosen here is zoos.

Procedure

1 Ask students to work in pairs. Write a few questions on the board for them to ask each other.

Examples Do you think zoos are educationally useful for children?
What arguments would you make against zoos?
Do you have any personal reactions to zoos?

2 Ask some students to report back their findings. Use the reporting session to expand vocabulary.

3 Ask students to read the text and underline all the examples of words and phrases which add one argument to another.

4 Ask students to study the table in Worksheet 3.9 and write down four or five arguments about zoos. They should try to use different words and phrases from the table each time. As they do this, circulate and help, watching for any particular problems which may need further explanation and practice.

5 Ask students to exchange their writing and try to correct each other's work.

6 They are now ready to use their first draft to produce a more detailed set of arguments about zoos.

Worksheet 3.9

Zoos

Some people argue that zoos are a good thing because they are educational for children. However, this is not a strong argument when the problems of zoos are taken into consideration. Zoos are unnatural. They take animals from their natural home and confine them. They are cruel, too. Many animals are kept in cages that are too small for them. They also get very little exercise. In addition, the climate may be wrong for them and they become ill. As well as these arguments, I have a personal response to zoos. I think the human race should respect other species and it is undignified for wild animals to be stared at in cages.

Make sure you know how these words can link ideas. The table below shows their normal position in sentences

as well as	• Can go at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. • If it precedes a verb, the gerund is used, e.g. *As well as* swimming, the Swedes like many other water sports.
too	Goes at the end of a sentence or clause.
in addition	Usually goes at the beginning of a sentence and is followed by a comma.
also	Normally comes mid-sentence and is placed: —before a main verb, e.g. He is *also* the best student. —after an auxiliary verb, e.g. The driver has *also* been arrested. —after the verb *to be*, e.g. They *also* stole four watches.
and	With two co-ordinate clauses, addition can simply be indicated by using *and*.

Now write a set of arguments on another controversial topic. You could choose one of the following topics:

- Smoking in public places
- Government-funded nursery education
- Censorship of films
- Nudism on beaches

Try to use the connectives of addition shown in the table above.

3.10 Using connectives of concession

Level Intermediate

Time 30 minutes +

Aims To practise connectives of concession in a letter of complaint.

Preparation

Make copies of Worksheet 3.10.

Procedure

1 Introduce the topic by asking students if they think that producers of material for children, for example, books, plays, TV programmes, should have a policy on the portrayal of violence. Ask them to suggest guidelines.

2 Hand out the letter and the worksheet. Ask students to read the letter quickly and explain why the writer is complaining. Do they sympathize with him?

3 Draw the students' attention to the sentence beginning 'Despite your publicity...' and explain that there are several ways of writing this. Look at the sentence structures below the letter and ask students to complete them. Do this verbally with the class and then ask them to write down the possible sentences.

4 Ask the students to choose one of the structures and to use it in a letter of complaint selecting one of the situations on the worksheet.

Worksheet 3.10
A letter of complaint

Dear Sir

I am writing to complain about the current production of 'The Lion's Tale' at your theatre. Despite your publicity that it was a children's story and your policy only to stage suitable dramas, my children were terrified. The scenes in Act 2 were particularly horrifying when the lion attacked a villain. My son didn't sleep for two nights. Have you completely lost touch with the anxieties of small children? And what does your drama teach children about justice?

Yours faithfully
James Platt

| However ... | ... yet ... | ... Nevertheless ... |
| Despite ... | | Although ... |

Choose one of the structures above and write a letter of complaint. Either:

Write to your local council. They said that a tree which is blocking the light from your house would be cut back six months ago.

Or:

Write to a window supply company. They promised to fit a new window three months ago but haven't turned up yet.

3.11 Time sequencing in a story

Level Intermediate

Time 50 minutes +

Aims To describe events in a fictional narrative using time adverbials for sequencing.

Preparation

Make a copy of the cartoon story in Worksheet 3.11 for each student.

Procedure

1 Warm up to the topic by asking students if they have ever enjoyed reading cartoon stories. Ask them which ones and why?

2 Remind students of the conventions of a cartoon story, namely, the use of
—a caption at the top of a picture, which usually says something about the time sequence
—speech bubbles with arrows to speakers' mouths
—thought bubbles with a row of circles to people's heads (as in pictures 6 and 7).

3 Ask students to skim through the picture sequence in Worksheet 3.11 in order to get an impression of the story and its time sequence. Ask them to think individually about how a story could be constructed from the pictures.

4 Elicit some basic ideas from the class about who the characters are and what is happening in the story.

5 Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm the details of the story using the prompts below the cartoon. They should produce the speech or thoughts to go in the bubbles. A possible story is given below.

Example The young man (Ben) is in hospital to have a kidney transplant at 9 o'clock the next morning. He recognizes the nurse (Mary) because she lives in the apartment beneath his. She senses that he is worried about something. He explains that his father has just arrived from New Zealand and wants him to emigrate there to be with his parents. They had a big argument about it because he wants to stay in England and his father stormed off before Ben could tell him about the operation. Mary promises to speak to Ben's father that evening but there is no-one at home. She wakes in the night and hears a noise upstairs so she goes up to talk to Ben's father and explain the situation. He gets to the hospital in time to see Ben before the operation and waits to talk to him afterwards.

6 Ask students to work on the captions and choose what might be appropriate for the pictures 1-5. Elicit their ideas and write them on the board.

In pairs or small groups, make up the story.

1 First decide on how the characters relate to each other. Then give them names.

2 Think about the following questions:
- What do you think happens in this story?
- Why is the young man in hospital?
- Does he know the nurse?
- What do the young man and the nurse talk about?
- What does she promise to do?
- Who is the dark-haired older man?
- What does the nurse tell him?
- Why does he go to the hospital?
- How does the story end?

3 Write what the characters say or think in the speech or thought bubbles.

4 Match the captions below with pictures 1–5. Change the names to the ones you have chosen for the characters.

a Before she left, Mary made a promise.
b One afternoon, Nurse Mary Black and her friend Jenny were in the men's ward at Helford Hospital.
c Later that afternoon Mary went to check on the young man.
d When she saw the new patient, Mary welcomed him.
e Slowly the young man explained what was troubling him.

5 Now make up captions for pictures 6–10.

Photocopiable © Oxford University Press

7 Work with the whole class and elicit possibilities captions for pictures 6-10, writing them on the board and correcting the language as you do so.

Examples Picture 6: That evening Mary went up to Ben's flat and knocked on the door.
Picture 7: During the night she woke up and heard a noise upstairs.
Picture 8: After introducing herself, Mary explained Ben's situation to his father.
Picture 9: Just before 9 o'clock the next morning …
Picture 10: Later that day...

8 Ask students to write up the story individually, paying attention to the time sequence, and ask them to make up their own title for the story.

Acknowledgement

This idea and cartoon are adapted from *Freestyle* by Tricia Hedge (Nelson).

3.12 Organizing general and supporting statements

Level Advanced

Time 40–50 minutes

Aims To understand how paragraphs can be used to organize information in academic writing.

In this activity students create a text from isolated sentences. In doing so, their attention is drawn to organizing information in paragraphs, each with a general statement (or topic sentence) and supporting statements which are more specific or provide examples. The text in this task consists of an introductory paragraph and then three paragraphs. In putting the pieces of the text together, students begin to appreciate the structure of discourse and how they can develop ideas through a piece of writing.

Preparation

Make a copy of Worksheet 3.12 for each student.

Procedure

1 Warm up to the activity by asking the class what they know about children learning their first language.

Examples When do children start speaking their mother tongue?
What are they doing before they start speaking?
What is children's language like when they first start talking?

2 Give out Worksheet 3.12 and ask students in pairs to analyse the structure of the introductory paragraph. Elicit from them that it begins with two topic sentences and then makes a thesis statement. It ends with a link to the body of the essay which explains the organization of the essay.

3 Then explain how the paragraphs are divided into general statements and supporting statements, which are more specific or provide examples. Ask students to find the three supporting statements first and to write their letters beside the headings A, B, and C.

4 Check that they have found the general statements so that everyone starts the activity with the correct structure.

5 Then ask students to find the supporting statements. Encourage them to check with each other while they are working.

6 When you have checked the answers, ask students to work in pairs and decide on the best order of paragraphs.

7 Finally, when you have checked this and asked them to give reasons for this order, ask students to suggest a title for the essay.

Worksheet 3.12

Children learning language

1 First look at the introduction to this essay and analyse the function of each sentence. What is the thesis statement for the essay?

Many people have tried to learn languages as adults and have discovered how difficult it can be. For adults it can be particularly frustrating when progress seems to be slow. In recent years researchers have investigated the way in which children develop their mother language successfully and some new methods for teaching adults are based on their discoveries. This essay will look first at how children learn and then at methods for teaching adults.

2 In the twelve sentences below you will find three general statements. You will also find nine supporting statements, three to support each general statement. First find the general statements and write their letters in the chart below.

General statements	A:	B:	C:
Supporting statements			

3 Now find the three supporting statements for each topic sentence and write the lower-case letters in the correct column.

4 When you have checked the content of the three paragraphs with your teacher, decide on a sensible order of paragraphs and give the essay a title.

  a When they are about eighteen months old they begin to say words.

  b Yet children are not efficient language learners; the secret of their success is a near-perfect environment.

  c Finally, they hear a lot of simple language which is specifically directed at them.

  d To begin with, they hear patterns in the noise around them and begin to absorb words and rules.

  e We also know that children pick up language in their own way and in their own time.

  f Secondly, they have a right to be silent until they are ready to speak.

  g In other words, they acquire language in an order that is sensible to them.

  h We know that young children pick up their mother tongue unconsciously.

  i For example, we may think that putting an 's' on the third person singular is easy but children acquire this quite late in their language development.

  j By the age of six their learning of grammar is complete.

  k Children cannot be easily corrected either, only becoming accurate when they have mastered a rule by themselves.

  l Firstly, they learn in a stress-free environment compared with the conditions in which adults try to learn.

3.13 Working with language using dictogloss

Level   Elementary to advanced

Time   30 minutes +

Aims   To focus on grammar and sentence structure in writing.

Preparation

Dictogloss is a type of dictation where students are not given enough time to write everything down verbatim. They make notes as they listen and then elaborate them into a text of their own. In order to do this they need to pay careful attention to grammar and sentence structure. You will need to find a text suitable for the level of your students, ideally containing language they know and on a topic for which they have existing knowledge. The example used here is suitable for lower-intermediate students and is a text about gifted children. It is also important to find a text with content that is sufficiently interesting to generate discussion. Make photocopies for the class.

Procedure

1 Write 'gifted children' on the board and ask the class what they understand by the term. Elicit a definition. Ask anyone who knows a gifted child to describe their talents.

2 Explain that students are going to do a kind of dictation on a text about gifted children. Tell them to listen to the text as you read it to get the general idea but not to write anything at this stage. Read the text through at normal speed.

3 Read the text a second time and ask students to listen and take notes. They should write down key words and phrases.

4 Ask students to work in pairs, putting their notes together to create a text. Set a time limit on this.

5 Let the students hear the text a final time, note down anything they missed, and then revise their text.

6 Give out photocopies of the text and let students compare their own version with it, noting differences in the language.

7 You could follow up by asking students how they feel gifted children should be educated and conduct a class discussion on this.

Gifted children

Perhaps two children out of every hundred are gifted. In other words, they are very bright in some way. Gifted children, when they are very small, may not seem very different from other small babies. But they usually want to look at and investigate everything, and they are very active. In fact, some gifted children never want to sleep. They are too interested in the world around them. One child in Britain slept only two hours a night when she was a baby.

Gifted children often walk, talk, and read at a very early age. Or perhaps they have a particular gift like mathematical or musical talent. Mozart, for example, started composing music when he was five.

These children often have problems at school, probably because they get bored quickly. In fact, they can be very badly behaved. Some parents prefer to send their gifted child to a special school. Others think it is better to send their child to an ordinary school and give extra help at home or at summer school.

4

Improving

Introduction

It is probably true to say that many English language students around the world see the teacher as having major responsibility for helping them to improve their writing through the process of marking, which takes place after the writing is finished and has been handed in.

Marking can be a tricky process and many adults have lasting memories of bad marking strategies in their schooldays. I still remember the sense of disappointment I felt at the age of twelve, after spending hours writing an essay, when my English teacher returned it with the written comment, 'I will only mark this when it has been paragraphed properly.' I felt a strong sense of indignation because no one had ever taught me about paragraphing. It was one of those things that teachers assumed we would simply pick up through reading. Marking can also be a time-consuming process. It often forms a considerable part of the workload of the average English language teacher. It usually takes place under pressure of time, and leaves teachers with a dissatisfied feeling that they have made only a minimal contribution to a student's improvement. And there is little more frustrating than seeing a student glance momentarily at corrections and comments before putting the work away in a schoolbag.

In recent years teachers have come to realize more and more that the secret of a good piece of writing lies in the students' concern to review and improve their work. Good writers usually stop periodically to re-read, reflect, perhaps look back at the original plan, sometimes re-plan, and then work out how to express the next set of ideas. We also know that their main concerns while writing are to do with meaning and organization. Poorer writers tend from the beginning to be distracted by issues of accuracy, getting spellings or sentence structure accurate. Good writers leave accuracy until later and focus on getting the ideas down first. First they revise, that is, review, evaluate, rethink, and redraft. Then they edit, that is, check for accuracy and make the final revisions.

This is something that teachers need to keep in mind when they take on the task of helping students to improve their writing. Ideally, the teacher's role will be to encourage students to develop an effective process of drafting, redrafting, and editing. Some students, especially adults who are already experienced writers in their first language, may not need this kind of help but other students will. How can teachers provide constructive feedback which can be channelled into the processes of redrafting and editing? The answer to this question perhaps depends on the answers to two other questions:

- What creates quality in a piece of writing?
- How can we help students to see strengths and weaknesses in the quality of their writing, to build on the strengths and improve the weaknesses?

The first part of this Introduction will look at *what* and the second part will look at *how*.

What creates quality in a piece of writing?

When we look at a piece of writing, we should ideally be asking ourselves a number of questions. Is this a good piece of writing? What makes a good piece of writing? What skills do students demonstrate which show that they are on the way to becoming effective writers in English?

This takes us back to the idea of the good writer raised in the Introduction, and to the components of skilled writing ability which good writers demonstrate. If we list these components we can derive criteria for marking in the way represented in the diagram below. The first group of components consists of skills involved in the process of composing: having a sense of purpose; a sense of audience and a sense of direction. Together they could be termed 'authoring' skills. The second group comprises skills connected with 'crafting', that is, the way in which a writer puts together the pieces of the text and chooses appropriate and accurate language.

To take an example from the diagram, if we take the criterion of complexity, it could relate to the ability to use complex sentence structures, which in turn requires an ability to use a variety of linking and co-ordinating devices and more complex grammatical structures. Similarly, the criterion of accuracy may relate to accuracy of grammar, spelling, punctuation, or conventions such as the layout of a formal letter.

The diagram is arbitrary. It is simply meant to represent one possible method of generating criteria which can be used to give students feedback on the quality of their writing. The criteria can be used to help students revise their work or to mark the end product.

What skills do good writers demonstrate?	Criteria for Marking

Authoring
1 Having something to say (a sense of purpose) → Content
2 Being aware of the reader (a sense of audience) → Length / Style
3 Developing the ideas (a sense of direction) → Organization

Crafting
4 Organizing the content clearly and in a logical manner
5 Manipulating the script → Handwriting
6 Using the conventions, e.g. spelling, layout → Accuracy
7 Getting the grammar right
8 Developing sentence structure → Complexity
9 Linking ideas in a variety of ways
10 Having a range of vocabulary → Range

In this way teachers can formulate a checklist of criteria, and select those which fit the age and conceptual and language development of their students.

An interesting example of a scheme which uses a set of criteria has been produced for the First Certificate in English by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (Cambridge ESOL). This uses five criteria in its banding scheme: content, organisation and cohesion, range, register and format, and target reader. These are used in conjunction with task-specific criteria.

Clearly, this framework is intended for public examinations. Teachers using similar criteria for classroom feedback would ideally try to look for strengths as well as weaknesses and help students understand how they are developing as writers in relation to each criterion.

Positive feedback may be received through a grading system, through the teacher's written or spoken comments, or those of peers in the classroom. All of these procedures need to take into account the range of criteria presented above. If grading is an accepted norm, then perhaps teachers need to review the system in use, decide on its merits and drawbacks, and revise accordingly.

Two examples of grading systems are given on page 121 and are presented as sources from which teachers can develop systems suitable for their own students. If used periodically, they both have potential to indicate to students the progress they are making and encourage them to monitor their own development in the various components of skilled writing.

Band 5	Full realisation of the task set.
	• All content points included wth appropriate expansion.
	• Wide range of structure and vocabulary within the task set.
	• Minimal errors, perhaps due to ambition; well-developed control of language.
	• Ideas effectively organised, with a variety of linking devices.
	• Register and format consistently appropriate to purpose and audience.
	Fully achieves the desired effect on the target reader.
Band 4	Good realisation of the task set.
	• All major content points included; possibly one or two minor omissions.
	• Good range of structure and vocabulary within the task set.
	• Generally accurate, errors occur mainly when attempting more complex language.
	• Ideas clearly organised, with suitable linking devices.
	• Register and format on the whole appropriate to purpose and audience.
	Achieves the desired effect on the target reader.
Band 3	Reasonable achievement of the task set.
	• All major content points included; some minor omissions.
	• Adequate range of structure and vocabulary, wich fulfils the requirements of the task.
	• A number of errors may be present, but they do not impede communication.
	• Ideas adequately organised, with simple linking devices.
	• Reasonable, if not always successful attempt at register and format appropriate to purpose and audience.
	Achieves, on the whole, the desired effect on the target reader.
Band 2	Task set attempted but not adequately achieved.
	• Some major content points inadequately covered or omitted, and/or some irrelevant material.
	• Limited range of structure and vocabulary.
	• A number of errors, which distract the reader and may obscure communication at times.
	• Ideas inadequately organised; linking devices rarely used.
	• Unsuccessful/inconsistent attempts at appropriate register and format.
	Message not clearly communicated to the target reader.
Band 1	Poor attempt at the task set.
	• Notable content omissions and/or considerable irrelevance, possibly due to misinterpretation of task set.
	• Narrow range of vocabulary and structure.
	• Frequent errors which obscure communication; little evidence of language control.
	• Lack of organisation, or linking devices.
	• Little or no awareness of appropriate register and format.
	Very negative effect on the target reader.
Band 0	Achieves nothing: too little language for assessment (fewer than 50 words) or totally irrelevant or totally illegible.

From the *Cambridge First Certificate Handbook*

		20
1	Organization of content (clarity, coherence, paragraph development)	20
2	Range (grammatical structures, vocabulary)	15
3	Complexity of sentence structure	15
4	Accuracy of grammar (tenses, agreement, etc.) of sentence structure (word order, connectives, etc.) of spelling of punctuation	30
5	Fluency (feel for the language, appropriateness, use of idioms, etc.)	20
		100%

Grading criteria: Example 1

	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Inadequate	Weak
A General development					
1 Interest and force of content					
2 Development of ideas					
3 A sense of audience and style					
B Specific components in writing					
4 Grammatical skills					
5 Complexity of sentence structure					
6 Use of vocabulary					
7 Spelling					
8 Punctuation					
9 Presentation (neatness, handwriting, etc.)					

Grading criteria: Example 2

How can we help students to see strengths and weaknesses in the quality of their writing, to build on strengths, and improve weaknesses?

The answer to this question lies, I think, in the degree to which redrafting, editing, and marking are linked activities. It depends on the respective roles of teachers and students in the process of revision. An increasing number of teachers now take the view that feedback 'after the event', when the writing experience is no longer fresh in the writer's mind, has serious disadvantages. They see their role as encouraging as much revision as possible during the writing process. And revision can be prompted by the teacher or by other

students. Encouraging students to work collaboratively, as many of the tasks in this chapter do, has a number of advantages. Looking for problems in other students' drafts can increase awareness of likely problems in one's own. Having to explain a point to a reader obliges the writer to clarify an idea and its expression.

Student motivation to work collaboratively, however, cannot be taken for granted and needs careful management. If students have no previous experience of working in pairs or small groups, it may require careful introduction. With school students it can be useful to begin collaborative activity at the beginning of a new school year so that they accept it as a methodology appropriate to that level. In any event, it is perhaps best to move through stages: firstly suggesting that students read each other's work; then encouraging them to show drafts to each other in class for informal comment, perhaps in friendship groups; finally, moving to more structured peer conferencing or revision.

However, whether individual or collaborative, revision activities only make sense as part of a much wider process of planning and composition. Students need to be sure that their plans are reasonably well formed. Then they need to check a first draft to ensure that the 'global' structure of their writing is well organized. In this sense, the concept and practice of revision needs to be closely linked with the concept and practice of planning. Students need to look at a first draft to check that the purpose of the writing is clear, that its structure fits the type of writing they are engaged in, and that the style fits the intended readers. Only then does it make sense to turn attention to minor 'surface features' such as spelling, punctuation, word order, and so on.

In the majority of classrooms, the teacher will probably be the ultimate arbiter of what is accurate and appropriate in writing and will take on responsibility for final editing, particularly for accuracy. At this final stage, the amount and nature of marking will depend on a number of factors:

- the expectations students have from their previous experiences
- whether particular features of writing have been in focus during class and form a natural focus for feedback
- the personalities of individual students and the teacher's desire to build confidence, discourage carelessness, etc.
- the general stage of writing development and the need to encourage students
- the aims of setting a particular piece of writing
- the marking loads of the teacher
- the age of students and their ability to deal with concepts of what is appropriate or with the technical language of a marking code

As we look at these factors, it would seem sensible that an ELT school or department takes time to work out a policy for marking. Time will be needed to thrash out the issues and form some kind of consensus on what the policy should look like. The following agenda for a staff meeting to discuss and design a marking policy document might be a useful model for your own institution. The last question takes us back to issues of grading discussed earlier.

Questions 3 and 5 are best discussed with reference to student opinion. Student representatives could be asked to collect views or a member of staff could carry out a survey. The information thus gathered could be presented and discussed at the staff meeting. When a marking policy has been formulated, it can be published as a document for staff, students, sponsors, parents, and guardians. This allows shared understanding of criteria and procedures for correction and comment. A document such as the one on the next page, intended for junior secondary school pupils, can be produced at different levels of language in English and in the first language for elementary students. It is a sensible strategy to create expectations at the beginning of a course about how work will be dealt with, as it saves misunderstandings later on.

Designing the policy itself involves making decisions about strategies for marking, and a number of options are available. One effective way of arriving at such decisions is for a group of teachers to mark some scripts together, discussing the options available. Alternatively, they could take sample scripts marked by different teachers and discuss the effectiveness of the marking strategies demonstrated.

Consider the strategies used by the teachers who marked the scripts on page 125, the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy, what age and level of student each might be appropriate for, and in what situations you might use each one. Teachers using symbols in the margin are using those from the marking code suggested in Activity 4.10, 'Peer editing using an editing code'.

Possible strategies are to:

a replace part of the student's work with the correct form and with a more acceptable or appropriate version

b indicate an error by underlining and allowing the students to self-correct

A marking policy document

How your writing is marked in this school

1 First of all, you need to know that not all of your writing will be handed to your teacher for marking. Sometimes you will write in class and your teacher will read your work and help you as you go along.

2 While you are working, your teacher may start a discussion with you, asking questions, explaining things, and suggesting ways in which you can improve the content and organization of your work. The teacher may ask you to explain what you have written or what you plan to write next. Join in the discussion. Its purpose is to help you to learn.

3 Sometimes you will be asked to work with other students, looking at each other's plans or first drafts. This will help you to see ways of improving your own work. Be as careful, helpful, and constructive as you can.

4 When you have written a first draft, always look back through it. If you are writing at home, try to leave some time before you review it. Focus first on whether you are communicating your ideas clearly in a well-organized structure. Then go through and check more closely for things like spelling, punctuation, accurate grammar, word order, etc.

5 When your teacher marks a piece of work for you, do not expect every mistake to be corrected. Sometimes in class you will work on something of particular importance for the type of writing you are doing, for example, time connectives or tense sequences in a story, and this will be corrected in particular.

6 When you get corrected work back from your teacher, read it carefully. There will be time for you to do this in class.

7 Sometimes the teacher will underline mistakes and ask you to try to correct them yourself. Sometimes you will find a note in the margin which suggests a better way of expressing something. Keep a record book of anything useful. Then you will learn from your mistakes.

c indicate an error and identify the kind of error with a symbol, e.g. WO = wrong word order

d indicate that there is a certain kind of error on a line by writing a symbol in the margin but leave the student to locate the error.

Teachers will also wish to give general feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the work. Guiding principles for written summative comments could be:

- Always mention improvements, say which aspects are good, and why.
- Note any particular problems and suggest ways of improving.
- Answer any questions you have asked students to write for you.
- Summarize strengths and weaknesses and give the student a sense of development.

Text A

School does prepare you for adult life

I mean
I intend

There is a clear and direct relationship between school and society which must be understood as mutual and reciprocal. What [I am intending] to say is that the more school provides good citizens, the better society will go and, and conversely, ww
the more means society gives to school, the best will be its achievements. WF

these two

However, sometimes it happens that there is a gap between [both of them two],
owed either to a fast change in society (economical crisis, technological changes) ww

school does
not keep up
and

which is not followed by school or to the failures of the education system. !!
Unfortunately, the consequences are always supported by the pupils. Therefore suffered
the youth reachs his adult life without enough preperation to find a job or to do sp sp
it as required.

Text B

Television in every home

Nowadays, everyone, por or rich, has got a television. It is a confortable way to be informed about fashion, music or politic. There are educative programmes which help you to know more about countries, art and so on. After a hard work in the office there is nothing better than sitting in front of a television, watching a good programme and relaxing. Everybody enjoys it more than going to the cinema or having a stressing evening in a disco.

Text C

A short story about the kids in my family

WF

I live in an English family. We are 5 persons with myself. The two children are called Sarah and Mark. Sarah is 7 and Mark 11. I start with Sarah. She has

ww

half-long fair hair, blue eyes, a slim figure. Her skin is pale. At this time she has

WF WF

4 gaps between the teeth. So she looks funny. Sometimes she wear glasses and she's that is not a

sp

proud of them. With glasses she looks typicaly British. In my opinion means that negative

Λ

not negative. When I am playing only with her, she is polite, helpful, patient, thing to say

ww

funny and kindly. She fond to sing, to play, to watch TV, to play piano and much

Λ

more.

Text D

Dear Guido

wo

I was very pleased to receive [this morning] your unexpected letter.
discovered
From this I [came in the knowledge] that you decided to spend three months in England and that you arrived in Brighton the 1st October.

T

few weeks
In the last [period] you didn't have much fun, so with my letter I invite you

ww

at my home the 25th–27th October.

wo

You told me you haven't seen [yet] London. This will be your chance.

The rest of this section is devoted to a set of activities which show how students can be encouraged to improve their own work. Only one makes specific reference to technology but, clearly, the activity of revision is substantially assisted by the facilities available on a computer. However, these need to be used with care. Overusing the 'delete' facility can lead students into focusing on the level of clause and phrase, rather than trying to get their ideas down. A wise teacher will encourage them to concentrate first on using the speed afforded by word processing to express their ideas as quickly as possible, leaving gaps for words and phrases they are not sure of. Then the 'delete' and 'cut and paste' facility will assist them in the revision process. Students will also need to realize that having a 'spellcheck' facility is no substitute for careful proofreading as it will not pick up misspelled words which are actually English words with other meanings.

Before moving to the tasks, it is worth suggesting that teachers carry out a periodic self-assessment activity to check whether they are using the most effective strategies for their students and themselves in encouraging improvement in writing. Here's one to try at the beginning of a new term:

1 Do I ever work with students while they are writing, encouraging them to revise their work?
2 Do I sometimes ask my students to collaborate on writing tasks, planning together, producing parts of the text individually, and then piecing it together?
3 Do I ever ask students to comment on each other's writing?
4 Do I sometimes rewrite my students' work as a basis for discussion?
5 Do I mark completed work? Do I vary my marking strategies? Do students know what my marking policy is?
6 Do I ever ask students to correct each other's work?
7 Is my assessment verbal, written, or numerical? Is it constructive? Do I comment on strengths and weaknesses and give the student a sense of progress?

The activities in this chapter include all of these possibilities.

4.1 Raising awareness about writing

Level Elementary to advanced (possible with the lower levels if the questionnaire is translated into the students' first language)

Time 30 minutes +

Aims To encourage students to think about their own approach to writing.

Preparation

Design a questionnaire which you think will be most suitable for your own students. Its purpose is to encourage them to think about the ways in which they approach writing, their strengths and weaknesses in writing, and the ways in which they can help themselves to improve.

Procedure

1 Explain to students that you are going to ask them to think about writing in English classes by answering a questionnaire.

2 Ask students to work individually to tick the statements on the questionnaire that are true for them.

3 Ask students to work in pairs to go through the questionnaire and explain their answers, justifying what they have ticked and adding comments.

4 Use some of the statements to stimulate class discussion about student and teacher roles and responsibilities. Explain the kinds of activities you will set up to help them improve their writing, introduce them to the idea of working in pairs and groups, and tell them how you see your own role.

Comments

As a class activity at the beginning of a course, this activity has several advantages. It encourages students to think about the state of progress of their own writing, its strengths and weaknesses. It enables the teacher to raise awareness about classroom procedures which may be new to the students and clarify their value. It gives the teacher insights into the students' perceptions of writing and their expectations of the course and the teacher. It also (and teachers need to make a mental note of this) obliges the teacher to negotiate revision and marking strategies with students.

Sample questionnaire

What do you think about writing?

1 I expect to do a lot of writing in class.

2 I expect to do a lot of writing by myself at home.

3 I would like the teacher to look at my writing and help me improve it in class.

4 I try to review my own writing and improve it while I'm writing.

5 I usually check through my writing before I hand it in.

6 I expect the teacher to mark all the mistakes in my work.

7 I expect the teacher to mark the most important mistakes in my work.

8 I want the teacher to write comments about the strengths and weaknesses in my work.

9 I make a careful note of the teacher's comments and corrections when I get my work back.

10 I usually read the comments and look at the grade but I don't review the detailed corrections.

11 I would like to read other students' writing sometimes.

12 It could be useful to work with other students on writing.

13 I would enjoy talking to other students about their work.

4.2 Raising awareness about text quality

Level Elementary to advanced (possible with the lower levels if carried out in the first language)

Time 30 minutes +

Aims To raise awareness about what makes a good piece of writing.

Preparation

You can build up the criteria on the board as you elicit them from students and/or you can photocopy Worksheet 4.2.

Procedure

1 Tell the students you want them to think about what makes a good piece of writing. Explain that you want them to think about writing in general, not a specific type of writing such as a formal letter or a piece of descriptive writing such as a classification. You can make a couple of suggestions if students are slow to start. Build up a list on the board.

2 Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the list on the board or worksheet.

3 Elicit opinions from students and conduct a class discussion. Then explain that these are criteria they can use in reviewing their own or other students' work. They are also criteria you will use in reviewing their work.

Worksheet 4.2
Reviewing writing

What do you think makes a good piece of writing? Look at the list of criteria below.

a Do you think anything is missing?
b Which criteria do you think are most important?
c Which do you have most difficulty with?

1 Correct grammar
2 Length
3 Originality of ideas
4 Correct spelling
5 Correct punctuation
6 Appropriate level of formality
7 A range of vocabulary
8 Neat handwriting

9 Answering the question well
10 Complex and well structured sentences
11 Clear development of ideas and opinions
12 Good paragraphing
13 Clear links between sentences and paragraphs
14 A clear introduction and conclusion

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4.3 Evaluating plans

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 30 minutes +

Aims To encourage students to review their ideas and organization after initial planning.

Preparation

It is usually a good idea to start a lesson with this activity, given that students take differing amounts of time to plan a piece of work. Prepare the students for writing in the previous lesson and ask them to write a plan for homework, reminding them that they will be able to modify the plan as they write. This activity is best done with a piece of argumentative writing

Procedure

1 Explain to students that they are going to evaluate each other's plans, giving opinions and making suggestions for improvement.

2 Demonstrate what you want the students to do by working with the class. Ask a student to give you one of the arguments he or she has planned to make. Respond to it by asking for clarification, asking for more details, requesting an example, etc. Do this several times with different students.

3 Explain to the class that you want them to exchange plans and carry out the same procedure. Student A should explain a point from his or her plan and student B should respond. Remind them of how you responded with questions, requests for clarification or examples, and comments on how improvements could be made.

4 Students exchange plans. As they work, circulate and give help. Below is an example of two students working together in this activity. The topic of the essay was to discuss the statement, 'Society does not place the same value on family life as 50 years ago'. The class was at the intermediate level and some students had quite modest English but note the intention of student B's comments. She didn't have the sophisticated language to say, 'Don't make sweeping generalizations', but that is the meaning of her first comment. Similarly, her second comment implies, 'Justify the point you are making here.' And her third comment can be interpreted as, 'If you show awareness of counter-arguments, your essay will be better.'

A: I'm going to write that woman ... women ... in these days, are selfish and families are unhappy

B: *All* women?

A: Not ... but a lot

B: What do you mean about selfish? Why are they selfish?

A: Because they want children but they want work too. And families get ... you know ...

B: No, I ... Why do you think women want to work?

5 After the pair work, it can be useful to return to whole class work and elicit further arguments from the class for general comment. This will provide students with further ideas for their own work.

Comments

If, during the class work in step 2, the teacher deliberately overstates some criticisms and turns the activity into more of a game, this might make it easier for students to be critical of each other's work. In any event, students' cultural background needs to be taken into account as some students may find giving criticism difficult. Where appropriate, the teacher needs to engage the students in discussion about how this can be a valuable activity.

4.4 Writing in a group

Level Lower-intermediate to advanced

Time 30 minutes + for the group writing

Aims To encourage a shared process of revision through group discussion.

Procedure

1 Prepare a piece of writing with your class in the normal way. A story or description, for example, of a festival or a place, are the best types of text for group writing as they divide into sections which can be written by individual students. Do the early stages of brainstorming ideas for content with the whole class.

2 Explain to your students that they are going to do this piece of writing in a group, planning together, writing a section each, checking each other's drafts, and finally putting the sections together.

3 Organize your students into groups of four or five and appoint a group leader to get things started and direct discussion.

4 Each group makes decisions about how to organize the writing, what sections there will be and the order the sections will be in. Each student then writes one section.

5 As students draft and redraft their section, they should read each other's work, helping with revisions.

6 The various sections should then be assembled and changes made to ensure coherence of content and cohesion of language, for example, the use of time adverbials in a story.

Comments

This activity has advantages for both students and teacher. The teacher has far fewer pieces of writing to monitor and assist with, and can spend more time on the final drafts. The students gain help from each other. Discussion by several people ensures revision at the stage of putting the sections together and the discussion is a form of natural fluency practice.

4.5 Conferencing

Level Elementary to advanced (possible with the lower levels if the conference is carried out in the first language)

Time 5 minutes for each conference

Aims To encourage writers to talk about their writing and reflect on the process.

The writing conference is a face-to-face conversation between the teacher and student (or group of students). As students work on their writing in the classroom, the teacher can sit beside an individual and talk about writing in progress, give support with organization of ideas, and help to extend the student's thinking about the topic, where appropriate. Conferencing encourages students to think about writing as something that can be organized and improved. It gives them an opportunity to talk about their writing and reflect on the process. It gives teachers a chance to listen, learn, and diagnose. A survey at the City Polytechnic of Hong Kong found that the perception of writing teachers was that 'talking to students about their writing in a conference was the most helpful means of getting to grips with those fundamental aspects of meaning, content and organization which require analysis, discussion and negotiation' (Arndt 1993: 108).

Preparation

Ideally, this task should be done in connection with a class reader the students have been working with or in connection with an extensive reading programme in which students can select books of their own choice for individual reading. Prepare a list of questions for writing a book review, such as the one in Activity 3.5 on page 97, and make a copy for each student. No other preparation is needed as you will be working with the students' scripts.

Procedure

1 Begin with a class discussion in which students suggest categories for comment in reviewing a book. Write these up on the board and discuss a possible logical order for the categories.

2 Give out the list of questions, stressing that the categories could combine in many different ways.

3 Ask the students to discuss the questions in pairs to build up ideas for content.

4 In a short feedback session, encourage the class to discuss the questions and share ideas.

5 Then ask students to write a book review individually, using the list of questions in any way that might be useful to them.

6 When students have been planning and writing for 10–15 minutes, circulate and start conferencing with them.

Comments

Individual conferencing is most easily done with a small class so that the teacher can build understanding, over time, of how students are progressing. Even with larger classes, it will build rapport and confidence if the teacher can hold a conference with each student just once or twice a term. With very large classes, conferencing with a group of students, as they prepare a piece of writing together, can be useful. Teachers may like to prepare sets of questions to use in conferencing. The questions below were designed for use with student teachers at an upper-intermediate level who were writing about classroom procedures. The headings follow, in part and with adaptation, those suggested by Graves (1983) in his work on conferencing with young children.

Example

Helping writers to speak during conferencing

1 Opening questions

- How is the writing going/Where have you got to?
- Can you talk me through the procedure you are proposing for this classroom reading activity?
- What are your main aims in using this procedure?
- Do you anticipate any problems in using it?

2 Following questions

- Have you said everything your reader needs to know in your introduction?
- You've started this paragraph. How are you going to continue it? How will it develop the ideas in the previous paragraph?
- What examples are you going to give?

3 Focused questions

- What made you decide to choose these examples?
- Could you put this information at the beginning or is it better here? Would there be any advantage to your reader in moving it?

4 Process questions

- Did you find it easier to write the introduction this time?
- Did you use a particular way of planning this essay? How did you find it?
- Have you had any blocks with finding the right language? How did you deal with them?

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4.6 Reviewing a draft for content

Level Elementary to advanced (possible with the lower levels if the guidelines are translated into the students' first language)

Time 30 minutes + for introduction of checklist and practice

Aims To encourage individual revision with the use of guidelines.

Preparation

Before asking students to revise their own first drafts, it can be very useful to present the class with a first draft which needs revision of various kinds. A first draft on any topic, except a story, would be acceptable. You could write this yourself or use a draft from a student who you feel is strong enough to accept critical analysis from fellow students. Make photocopies for the class.

Procedure

1 Explain to students that during a first revision they should focus on content and organization. They should judge how clearly the ideas have been communicated.

2 Introduce the guidelines and give students time to read them through. Then answer any questions for clarification.

3 Suggest students work in small groups to evaluate the piece of writing you have prepared, using the questions in the guidelines.

4 Go through the questions with the class, eliciting their opinions and taking up their agreements and disagreements for discussion, making sure throughout that students understand exactly what the questions are asking for. Ask students to suggest revision, for example, more examples (in response to question 5) or better connectives (in response to question 11).

5 Ask students to use the guidelines to revise their own work. If they are used to word processing, suggest that they print out the draft and mark it up with comments in the margin, highlighting, and using boxes and arrows to suggest moving chunks of text around. Ask students to bring the marked-up drafts to class. You can also ask them to write questions at the end of their writing about anything they are uncertain of, for example, *How about paragraph 3? Is it a good example? Do I need another example? Can I start the paragraph with 'In contrast'?* These drafts can then be used for peer evaluation as students explain their revisions to a partner and ask for their opinions.

Guidelines for reviewing your draft

A Purpose and style of writing

1 Who are the real or imaginary people you are writing for? Is your style appropriate, e.g. formal, informal, polite, persuasive?

2 What is your purpose for writing? Is it clear? Do you think you have achieved your purpose? Why/why not?

3 What type of writing is it, e.g. letter, newspaper article, academic essay? Does it fit the expectations for this type, e.g. layout, paragraphing, use of colloquialisms?

B Content

4 What is the main idea you want to express and where will your reader find it?

5 What do you think your reader already knows about this topic? Have you taken this into account? Do you need to give more explanation or examples?

6 Is it easy to follow the development of ideas or information throughout the writing?

7 Is your writing divided into sections which group ideas clearly?

8 Is the first paragraph interesting and appropriate?

C Organization

9 Are the ideas or information in a sensible sequence? Do you need to change the sequence in any way?

10 Have you used paragraphing appropriately to help your reader?

11 Are the links between ideas clear? Underline all the connectives you have used. Can you improve any of them?

Comments

These are general guidelines for reviewing a draft for content. As students are introduced to different types of writing, more specific checklists can be used (see Activity 4.8 on page 000).

4.7 Using taped comments on first drafts

Level Elementary to advanced (possible with the lower levels if carried out in the first language)

Time 10 minutes for introduction in class

Aims To help students revise their writing using verbal comments from the teacher.

Preparation

This procedure needs a cassette recorder and cassette. Where appropriate, students can be asked to provide a cassette which can be re-used for each piece of work handed in.

Procedure

1 Explain to students that you have recorded your comments on their draft. They will find numbers in the margin of the draft which indicate the point at which you stopped reading and recorded your comments.

2 Explain that you have commented on a range of things but, since it is a first draft, you have focused on meaning and organization. They should use your comments to improve their work.

3 Suggest that they keep a notebook in which they write down areas you mention for improvement so that they can check these in their next pieces of work as well.

4 Students can also be encouraged to respond on the tape, thus creating a dialogue with the teacher. They can make comments, ask questions, etc. You can listen to these when the cassette comes back with the next piece of work. The student in this extract has responded to a suggestion the teacher has made.

Example Teacher: As I look at the third paragraph, what strikes me here is that you've launched into an interesting discussion of the bilingual individual, which is highly relevant to the topic of the essay, but you haven't signposted your reader, and you haven't provided a link back to the title or the introduction. You need to give your reader a sense of where your essay is going … to be more explicit about where you are taking your reader.

Student: Re-reading the assignment and listening to you, I realize now the lack of links. In my next assignment I've started using headings and subheadings … it's a helpful way of keeping me on target and providing my reader with guidance. Reading it again reminded me of someone just learning how to use a standard transmission and popping the clutch from paragraph to paragraph…

Comments

There are several advantages for the teacher in this procedure. It allows for more detailed comment and it is easier to respond to good aspects of the student's essay as they are read. It is also possible to give the student a clear idea of any difficulties you have in following the thread of their ideas or argument. In my own experience students respond warmly to this procedure. Here are some comments from a group of BEd students the first time they received taped comments:

Examples This kind of feedback helps the student to see how the tutor is progressively reacting to the work. It really helps to follow the tutor's train of thought.

As I listened, I was referring back to the part of the material that was commented on.

I listened to the tape several times, went back to the material, and thought about the comments. I also made notes from the tape.

* Spoken comments were much more powerfully touched to my heart …

There was much more space so I got very detailed reactions …

4.8 Peer conferencing on drafts

Level   Upper-intermediate to advanced

Time   10 minutes + for introduction and practice in class

Aims   To aid revision by encouraging student feedback on each other's work.

Preparation

For this activity students need to have produced a first draft for their essay. The topic 'Continuous assessment is a more effective way of assessing students' progress than timed written examinations', which is used in activity 3.4 on page 95, would be a suitable one. You need to have designed a set of guidelines which can be used to analyse the quality of a contrast and comparison essay. The one given below was designed for a group of students preparing for undergraduate courses. They had been taught to write topic sentences for the main points of an essay.

Guidelines for checking the draft of a contrast and comparison essay

Read through your partner's essay and answer the following questions. Then give your opinions and suggestions to your partner.

1 Does the introduction make clear the two topics that are being contrasted and compared?

2 How many points does the essay contain for contrast and comparison? Are there sufficient points to make a sensible comparison?

3 List the main ideas which are used as topic sentences.

   a _____

   b _____

etc.

4 Does the essay use approximately the same amount of space to describe and discuss each idea? If not, are there good reasons for the imbalance?

5 Circle each connective used.

   • Are there enough? Or too many?

   • Are they used appropriately?

6 Can you suggest the use of other connectives which would make the essay clearer?

7 Are there signposts for the reader between the different points which link them and give the reader a sense of direction?

8 Is the conclusion effective?

9 Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Procedure

1 Explain to students that they are going to help each other with the revision process and give some advantages they can gain from this, for example, learning to identify strengths and weaknesses which they might then perceive in their own work.

2 Introduce the guidelines you have prepared and go through them making sure that students understand the questions.

3 Ask students to exchange drafts with a partner and work through the guidelines.

4 Students should then go through the analysis with their partner, explaining points, answering questions, and asking the teacher to moderate where there are any disagreements.

Comments

If you have not tried peer conferencing and would like some evidence of its value, try the practical accounts of their students' reactions given by Keh (1990) or Tsui and Ng (2000). You might also enjoy an account by DiGiovanni and Nagaswami (2001) of on-line peer review.

4.9 Reformulating

Level Upper-intermediate to advanced

Time 20 minutes + for discussion of reformulation

Aims To give students the opportunity to analyse and discuss organization and accuracy in their own and each other's work as part of the revision process.

Preparation

This technique is suitable for any topic, but in the early stages of using reformulation with students it is a good idea to choose a topic for which you can provide information (see Activity 3.4 on page 95 for a contrast and comparison essay) or for which you can easily elicit ideas in class discussion (see Activity 2.1 on page 56). In this way, students can focus on expression rather than content. At later stages reformulation can be used to raise awareness of appropriate discourse organization.

Procedure

1 Students carry out a common writing task of a guided nature. You provide or elicit substantial information so that students can focus on expression rather than content.

2 Ask students to discuss in pairs or groups a plan for the writing. They need to plan the overall structure, the order of information, and some of the details of the sections.

3 After the advanced planning has been completed, each student writes a first draft either in class or at home and hands it in to you.

4 You review their work and indicate any problems by underlining, but do not give corrections.

5 You 'reformulate', i.e. rewrite, one student's essay. The first few times you do this it is wise to choose a student who can cope with the experience of having his or her work analysed by the class. Make sure that you follow the ideas closely but improve accuracy and appropriateness.

6 Then make photocopies of the original and the reformulation and distribute both to the class.

7 Students compare the two versions, making a list of major changes and discussing the reasons for them, for example, more appropriate level of formality, more precise information, better sentence structure.

8 Students then review their own first drafts with your underlinings and try to improve what they have written.

Comments

1 Reformulating is a valuable technique which makes revision and editing an integral part of writing classes. It moves away from the narrower idea of 'correction', which often tends to focus on the surface features of language, e.g. spelling, punctuation. It gives students a chance to analyse and discuss the organization of meaning as well as accuracy of expression in their own work and that of other students.

2 There are several advantages to reformulation. It enables students to see a proficient model with which to compare their own attempt and encourages them to think about audience and appropriate style. When students have become familiar with the procedure, you can also reformulate more globally and focus students' attention on appropriateness, discourse organization, and paragraph structure.

3 There is a risk, when the technique is new, that students over-correct their first drafts in order to move closer to the model, but this tendency decreases with more experience.

Acknowledgements

The steps given here were suggested by Maggie Charles in a paper at the IATEFL Annual Conference, Brighton, 1986, as a variation on the procedure outlined by Allwright and Allwright (1984).

4.10 Peer editing using an editing code

Level Elementary to advanced (possible with the lower levels if the first language is used)

Time 40 minutes for introduction in class and practice

Aims To give students practice in identifying errors in their own and fellow students' work.

Preparation

You will need to prepare an editing code similar to the one shown below. This should try to fit the students' educational system and culture as far as possible but, at the same time, introduce useful ideas about editing strategies. Make a copy for each student. You could also make a large poster for display on the classroom wall. You will need copies of a final draft, one you have written yourself with errors included, or one from a student who will be able to tolerate class analysis of his or her work.

Procedure

1 Prepare a piece of writing in the normal way with your class and ask them to continue at home until they have a final draft ready for editing.

2 Explain to the students that they are going to act as editors and give them a copy of the editing code. Working in pairs or small groups, they should read through the list making sure that they understand the symbols. Invite students to suggest amendments and additions to it and negotiate the final code with them.

3 Give out the copies of the final draft you prepared and ask students to work in pairs, using the editing code to mark up the draft.

4 Go through the draft with students and check their understanding of the symbols and how they are used. (Marking up an OHT of the draft as you elicit points from the students would be useful.)

5 Ask students to exchange their own drafts in pairs and work through their partner's draft, locating errors and using the coding system to indicate them. Circulate and help while they are doing this.

6 Students should then exchange work, interpreting the symbols to understand the problems in their own work and make corrections, checking with their partners for clarification.

Comments

The editing code shown here was designed with a group of upper-intermediate students. Students and teacher suggested, negotiated, and agreed items, tested out the scheme, and added to it. It was 'published' as a reference photocopy for each student in the group.

Practice in suggesting corrections in their classmates' work can help students to recognize errors in their own. When students have to explain points to a partner, their own understanding is redefined and clarified. It requires them to think carefully about accuracy in writing.

Example

Editing code

WF	wrong form	*WF*	*The harder you work the <u>best</u> will be your achievements.*
WW	wrong word		*...patient, funny, and <u>kindly</u> ᵂᵂ*
T	wrong tense		*In the last few weeks you <u>didn't have</u> much fun*
Λ	something is missing		*You arrived in Brighton ⌄1st July.*
Sp	wrong spelling		*<u>confortable</u> ˢᵖ*
WO	wrong word order		*You haven't seen [yet] London*
P	wrong punctuation		*Look out. ᴾ*
V	wrong verb form		*The Titanic <u>sunk</u> very quickly.*
//	new paragraph needed		
∅	not necessary		*John came in and ⊘he⊘ sat down.*
‿	You don't need a new sentence. Join up the ideas.		
?	I don't understand what you're trying to say.		
﹋	This isn't quite right. It needs clearer expression. Usually the teacher provides an alternative.		
[ ]	This part needs to be re-arranged or reworded.		
!!	You really should know what's wrong here because —we've just done it in class		

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4.11 Self-editing for language accuracy

Level Elementary to advanced

Time 30 minutes +

Aims To encourage students to take responsibility for checking accuracy in their own work.

Preparation

Choose some sentences from the most recent batch of writing your students have done. These should demonstrate some or all of the problems shown in the guidelines below. They could be written on the board during the lesson or a worksheet could be prepared and photocopied with a simple instruction to find the problems in the sentences and correct them.

Procedure

1 Many students will not need to be persuaded of the importance of accuracy. With others it may be necessary to explain that accuracy is a major criterion in the assessment of examination scripts or necessary in real-life writing to make sure it is as clear as possible to the reader.

2 Explain that you expect students to take responsibility for editing their own writing and that sometimes you will ask them to practise by editing the writing of other students in the class.

3 Ask students to review the sentences on the worksheet in pairs or small groups. They should try to identify the problems and correct the sentences. Circulate and monitor their discussions, helping where you can.

4 Elicit opinions from students in a class discussion, correcting the sentences and naming the problems in ways that will be meaningful to them. (You may have different labels for the problems shown on the guidelines, for example, over-long sentences are sometimes called 'stringy sentences'.)

5 Give out the guidelines and ask students to review them.

6 Suggest that students always look carefully for problems with sentence structure as they edit their work.

Example

Guidelines for editing sentence structure

These are some of the most common problems in sentence structure:

1	Fragments (parts of sentences)	*Pets can be comforting* / f̶For example, a little dog∅ *can sit on your lap.*
2	Repetitious sentences	The teacher found that the students behaved better when she gave (the students) games to play.
		them
3	Gapped sentences	*a* The train took/very long time to reach Paris.
4	Non-parallel sentences	*designing* His main responsibilities were (design of) the house and leading the group of craftsmen.
5	Misplaced modifier sentences	People drove off from the sale in trucks heaped high with furniture (talking and laughing.)
6	Sentences in which subject and verb do not agree	*is* (The start) of the holidays (are) a time to relax.
7	Split sentences	He had a chance to take his driving test early which *enabled him* (he was able) to drive to Scotland.
8	Very short sentences	*where* SARS is a killer virus. It originated in China. /T̶here have been many deaths (there.)
9	Run-on sentences	Politicians are mostly dishonest people. T̶hey cannot be trusted.
10	Over-long sentences	When we moved to the city and I started school there I was very unhappy at first. (because) Everything was strange to me, the books we had to read, the children's voices, the way the teacher spoke to us; *though* b̶ut̶ gradually I began to feel more comfortable and made some friends.

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Comments

At lower levels, this activity can be undertaken in the first language, at higher levels in English. The guidelines will need to be written at the appropriate level for particular classes and examples which relate to the level of students' writing should be used. Alternatively, the guidelines could be written in the first language.

The guidelines need to be prepared by the teacher or a group of teachers working collaboratively. They can focus on various aspects of language accuracy; sentence structure, punctuation, and common grammatical errors or spelling errors for the language group. They can also be subdivided into separate categories, for example, separate guidelines can be provided for capitalization, commas, colons, and semicolons. (Grammar reference books will provide the necessary information needed.) For students who are writing for academic purposes, guidelines on referencing and on frequently used abbreviations in academic writing will be useful. The guidelines below on capitalization are for elementary to intermediate students.

Example

Guidelines for editing: capitalization
Capital letters are used:

- At the beginning of sentences, e.g. *He spoke quietly*.
- For nations and nationality, e.g. *France, the French language, a Frenchman, a French artist*
- For names of days, months and festivals, e.g. *Tuesday, July, Easter, Ramadan, New Year*
- For periods in history, e.g. *the Renaissance, the Dark Ages*
- For names and titles of people, e.g. *Anne, Anne Jones, Mrs. Anne Jones, Dr Jones, Professor Jones*
- For names of mountains, rivers, cities, geographical areas, e.g. *Mont Blanc, the Nile, Lake Superior, Ellis Island, the Sahara Desert, Athens, Tokyo, the Pacific Ocean*
- For titles of books, works of art, films, newspapers, TV programmes, e.g. *Persuasion, Mona Lisa, Titanic, The Times, News at Ten*
- For abbreviations, e.g. *R.S.V.P., B.A.*

4.12 Making your own dictionary

Level Elementary to advanced (at lower levels the discussion could take place in students' first language)

Time 20 minutes + for introduction in class

Aims To encourage students in autonomous learning in relation to self-help sources for writing.

Preparation

You will need photocopies of Worksheet 4.12 or your own example of an entry in a student's dictionary.

Procedure

1 Ask students to discuss the questions in Part 1 of Worksheet 4.12. They could do this in pairs or small groups to begin with.

2 Elicit student responses in a whole-class discussion and focus on what arrangement they think might be best for a personal dictionary.

3 Ask them to look at the example of an entry and think about the possible usefulness of the various components of the entry.

4 Encourage students to make their own dictionary and try using the words in their writing.

Comments

1 When I tried this out with a class of intermediate students, I encouraged them to use an arrangement by topics (whatever form their initial entries took) and experiment with new words in their writing, highlighting those they wished me to check for appropriate use.

2 This idea of a personal dictionary, sometimes referred to as a vocabulary notebook, is usefully discussed in practical articles by Schmitt and Schmitt (1995) and Fowle (2002).

Worksheet 4.12

Making your own dictionary

1 Do you have a vocabulary book?

Which words do you put in it
- Words you know but with difficult spellings?
- New words you learn in class?
- Words you find when you are reading?

How do you arrange the words?
- Alphabetically?
- Under topic headings?
- As you read them or learn them? (no special order?)
- Like a diary, lesson by lesson?
- Any other way?

Which arrangement do you think is best?

2 Look at this entry from a Swedish student's personal dictionary.

International Phonetic Alphabet, to show pronunciation, if you know it

part of speech

translation into your own language, if you want to use it

[fæsɪneɪt]

to fascinate (verb)

fasc-i-nate   *fascinated by (adj with prep)*

fascinating (adj)

fascinera

I am fascinated by Indian music.

I think Indian music is fascinating.

a way of showing the number of syllables and which one to stress

useful related words

example sentences to show how to use the word

3 Try making your own dictionary. You should:
- decide how to organize the words. You could group words under letters and arrange the words under topics (e.g. food, weather, work) in another section of your book.
- give a guide to pronunciation
- show related words that are useful
- give example sentences so you remember how to use words.

4.13 Keeping a language notebook

Level Intermediate to advanced

Time 30 minutes for introduction in class

Aims To encourage students in autonomous learning in relation to self-help sources for writing.

Preparation

1 You will need to produce a set of guidelines (see the next page for an example). What you include will depend on the level and needs of your students. The example here was made by an upper-intermediate student who needed to review articles in professional magazines, newsletters, and journals.

2 Ask students to find an article which they feel has been written in a clear and accessible style. They should make a note of phrases which they think they could use in their own writing. You could ask them to note phrases which fall into certain categories, for example, setting goals, introducing new sections, making conclusions.

Procedure

1 Explain to students that the goal of the activity is to see how useful it can be to pick up language used by skilled writers to express particular kinds of functions in writing an article.

2 Ask students to work in groups of three or four. They should exchange the phrases they have noted down from their own articles and, as they do so, try to categorize them according to function, for example, linking sections of the text or making evaluations. Allow 10–15 minutes for this work but monitor and reduce or expand the time as necessary.

3 Working with the whole class, elicit first the categories students have created, finding effective headings to write on the board or OHT. Then elicit some of the phrases they have picked up and check, as you do so, that they fit the category. Comment on any constraints on their use or stylistic matters.

4 Encourage students to keep their own language notebook and to enter any useful phrases they find during their reading. You could later hold 'clinics' in class, i.e. times when students can ask questions about the language they have been acquiring in this way.

Comments

If you have been introducing your students to different types of discourse organization, e.g. contrast and comparison or process description, you may wish to encourage them to look for language used by skilled writers within each type.

Useful language for writing a review

1 The aim of the article is to:
—stimulate new thought on the issue of ...
—address issues in ...
—debate a major concern
—report on a study or investigation
—provide an overview perspective on ...

2 What the author actually does:
—traces the history of ...
—offers a specific suggestion
—provides a commentary on ...
—identifies the factors involved in ...
—explores the assumptions/ideas underlying ...

3 In the process of developing the text, the author also:

—reviews	—reminds us
—addresses	—critiques
—moves into	—takes another direction
—presents	—continues by
—enumerates	

4 Useful language for evaluation:
—Most crucial in the argument is ...
—He/she makes strong arguments for ...
—Most compelling to the reader is his/her argument for ...
—It engages the reader by ...
—He/she carefully dissects the ways in which ...

5 What the article will do for the reader:
—It provides a valuable source of information on ...
—It adds insights to our knowledge of ...
—It contributes to the dialogue of enquiry into ...
—It stimulates a critical perspective on ...

Appendix

Useful websites

General sites

There are two very useful sites which will provide you with numerous links to resources for both teachers and learners, including many related to writing.

The ESL Café Web Guide
http://eslcafe.com/search/index.html

The Linguistic Funland TESL Page
http://www.tesol.net

Setting up a class website

If you wish to set up your own interactive class website with class email, homework assignments, and sharing ideas for writing, a useful site is:

http://myclass.net

E-pals

If you wish to encourage your learners to practise writing to e-pals, two good sites are:

http://www.ks-connection.org

http://www.tesol.net/penpals/penpal.cgi

Sites for student writing

The sites below encourage students to submit their writing and read other students' work. They provide good examples of student writing from around the world. The first focuses on projects, the second on stories, and the third includes essays, short stories, letters, poems, and song lyrics.

http://www.tesol.net/tesl-student-projects.html

http://www.b5notebook.org

http://www.englishforums.com

Sites for teachers

There are a number of sites which offer discussion groups or clubs for teachers, sometimes with expert forums, sometimes inviting contributions to share with other members. These are a source

of advice and activities for writing. Some useful ones are:

http://www.eltforum.com

http://www.oup.com/elt/global/teachersclub

Reference works

Many reference works are now available on the Internet and students can be trained to use them. Some of these are:

Purdue University's on-line writing lab
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
http://www.oup.com/elt/oald

Capital Community College Foundation's Guide to Grammar and Writing
http://ccc.commnet.edu/grammar

Magazines and journals for teachers

The following websites sometimes contain practical articles and teaching suggestions for writing:

International TESOL Journal
http://iteslj.org

English Teaching Professional
http://www.etprofessional.com

ESL Magazine
http://www.eslmag.net

ELT Journal
http://www.eltj.oupjournals.org

Activity 1.11 Internet greetings

Useful websites for this activity are:

http://www.greetingcards.msn.com

http://www.cardsdirect.co.uk

http://www.bluemountain.com

http://uk.greetings.yahoo.com

You are also welcome to send in examples of your students' writing to this book's website, www.oup.com/elt/teacher/rbt. If your students' work is selected for display on the site, you and they will receive free books.

Note

The information provided here is up-to-date and the links are all live at the time of going to press. However, the Internet is constantly changing, and some websites become inactive or unobtainable, while new ones appear on a daily basis. If you find any links which are no longer working or if you have any suggestions, please contact us via the feedback form at

http://www.oup.com/elt/teacher/rbt

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White, R. 1987. *Writing: Advanced.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

White, R. and **V. Arndt.** 1991. *Process Writing.* Harlow: Longman.

Further reading

Brookes, A. and **P. Grundy.** 1990. *Writing for Study Purposes.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book provides a useful combination of theoretical background on the writing process and practical suggestions for classroom procedures, including 44 exercises for teaching students who are writing in academic contexts.

Grabe, W. and **R. Kaplan.** 1996. *Theory and Practice of Writing.* London and New York: Longman.

The authors give an overview of the various theoretical discussions of writing, looking at both investigations into the process of writing and research in the field of text linguistics. They go on to look at approaches to the teaching of writing at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. The book ends with discussions of responding to writing and issues in writing assessment.

Graves, D. 1983. *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work.* London: Heinemann.

Graves has studied young first language writers in school to find out what developing writers can tell us about the processes involved in writing. He suggests that his book is read as a series of 'workshops' which offer advice on classroom practice and insights into 'growth' in writing ability and the factors which influence it.

Hyland, K. 2002. *Teaching and Researching Writing.* London: Longman.

This book outlines the historical and conceptual background to the field of writing and deals with current issues in both research into writing and the teaching of writing. A useful book for teachers who wish to find out more about how writing is researched. The final section is a useful description of resources and references available in the field.

Kroll, B. (ed.) 1990. *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This is a set of thirteen articles which cover topics on composing processes, teacher response to writing, writing assessment, and links between reading and writing. The book presents an informative mixture of research studies and practical classroom pedagogy. It gives both historical information on the development of different approaches to the teaching of writing and a clear account of current views.

Leki, I. 1989. *Academic Writing: Techniques and Tasks.* New York: St Martin's Press.

This book is aimed at students who need to write in English for academic purposes. In Part One, students are taken through the writing process and can discover strategies useful to themselves. They are introduced in turn to 'getting to draft', 'working with a draft', and 'reworking the draft'. In Part Two, students practise a variety of academic assignments. This book is a good example of current ideas in practice.

Sherman, J. 1994. *Feedback*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This is a coursebook for intermediate students of English who need to improve composition writing. It usefully incorporates ideas about the process of writing, particularly about the role of feedback in revision. It is useful for both classroom work and self-directed work and contains tutorials about essential aspects of writing, such as evaluating the quality of one's own work.

Smith, F. 1982. *Writing and the Writer*. London: Heinemann.

Frank Smith offers a stimulating analysis of what writing involves for a writer and for a child learning to write. He explores interaction between the writer and the text and the reader/writer contract. The book is reflective and highly individualistic. It builds theories but does not attempt to offer any analysis of data or observation of writers writing, nor does it discuss basic issues such as the functions of writing. Nevertheless, it is a thought-provoking book for teachers working with writing in any context.

White, R and **V. Arndt** 1991. *Process Writing*. London: Longman.

This is a resource book for teachers which focuses on the process of writing and offers a collection of procedures and lesson formats. Teachers can dip in and find ideas for their own classes. It is illustrated by examples of student writing. The approach is based on collaborative effort among learners and between teacher and learners.

Index

References are to page numbers first, then activity numbers.

Topics

This series gives teachers, trainers, and trainee teachers practical guidance in key aspects of language teaching. Each book includes an introduction and up to 100 classroom ideas, materials, and techniques. The activities are clearly presented, and offer teachers all the information they need about appropriate level, time, preparation, materials, variations, and follow-up activities.

This second edition of **Writing** takes into account feedback from teachers worldwide. The first edition won the English Speaking Union's Duke of Edinburgh award and has been described by teachers and reviewers as 'brilliant' and 'innovative'.

— many new activities and texts
— helps students to develop clear, effective writing in English
— provides opportunities to practise various forms and functions of writing, and to develop a range of skills
— shows how to give students' writing a communicative purpose
— involves students in collaborative writing, reviewing their work, revising it, and editing the final draft.

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