TEACHING MAIN TECHNIQUES FOR GETTING STARTED WRITING PROCESS

Abdullajonov M.
Teacher of department of foreign languages, faculty of agro engineering and hydro melioration,
Andijan Institute of Agriculture and Agro technologies,
Andijan, Uzbekistan

Abstract: Teaching writing is a common theme among most researchers who worked in the sphere of language learning and methodology. Having based upon the actuality of the theme we are able to formulate the general goals of our qualification work.

Key words: Teaching, language, writing, language learning and methodology, exercises, researchers, techniques of teaching.

Teaching writing should be started from beginning level. Most school textbooks are focused on teaching writing separately without integration of other skills. In other words, our qualification work pursues as its major aim to help foreign students improve their writing skills with the integration of other skills from the beginning level. The significance of our work can be proved that we tried to find optional methods of improving writing skills from the beginning level and we applied them in practice.

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Having based upon the actuality of the theme we are able to formulate the general goals of our work.

a) To study, analyze, and sum up the modern methods of teaching writing;

b) To analyze the major results achieved in the studied field;

c) To prove the idea of importance of improving students' writing skills;

d) To analyze school textbooks and work out a series of activities for improving students' writing skills.

The methods of the research. The main methods for compiling our work are the method of analysis and the method of research. In our work, we analyzed school textbooks and added some new activities which we considered suitable for teaching and improving students' writing skills.

Several heuristic devices1 (or invention strategies) which can be explored in class for the purpose of providing students with a repertoire of techniques for generating ideas are the following:

Brainstorming. This is often a group exercise in which all of the students in the class are encouraged to participate by sharing their collective knowledge about subject. One way to structure teacher to suggest a broad topic, such as for choosing a particular academic major, and have students call out as many associations as possible which the teacher can then write on the board. The result would be far more material generated than any student is likely to think of on his/her and then all students can utilize any or all of the information when turning to the preparation of their first drafts.

Listing: Unlike brainstorming, as described above, listing can be a quiet essentially individual activity. Again, as a first step in finding an approach to a particular subject area (such as the use and abuse of power, to cite an example), the students are encouraged to produce as lengthy a list as possible of all the subcategories that come to mind as they think about the topic at hand. This is an especially useful activity for students who might be constrained by undue concern for expressing their thoughts grammatically correct sentences, because lists do not require complete sentence

Free writing: Suggested by Elbow for helping native speakers break through the difficulty of getting started, free writing is also known by various other terms, such as "wet ink" writing and "quick-writing." The main idea of this technique for students to write for a specified period of time (usually about 5 minutes) without taking their pen from the page. As Elbow puts it, "Don't stop for anything. . . . Never stop to look back, to cross something out,. . . to wonder what word or thought to use ... If you get stuck it's fine to write I can't think what to say. . . as many times as you like." Freed from the necessity of worrying about grammar and format, students can often generate a great deal of prose which provides useful raw material to use in addressing the writing assignment at hand. For EFL students, this technique often works best if the teacher provides an opening clause or sentence for the students to start with. So, for example, if the next assignment is to write a paper about one's personal philosophy of life, a short free writing session can begin with the words "Life is difficult but it is also worthwhile." The free writing generated after the students copy this sentence and continue to write down whatever comes into their heads can be kept private or shared with other students. It can also be used as the basis for one or more subsequent 5- to 10-minute free writing "loops"2 which are additional free writing sessions starting with whatever key idea derives from material discovered through the process of the previous quick-writing step.

Clustering: Another technique for getting many ideas down quickly, clustering begins with a key word or central idea placed in the center of a page (or on the blackboard) around which the student (or teacher using student-generated suggestions) jots down in a few minutes all of the free associations triggered by the subject matter--using simply words or short phrases. Unlike listing, the words or phrases generated are put on the page or board in a pattern which takes shape from the connections the writer sees as each new thought emerges. Completed clusters can look like spokes on a wheel or any other pattern of connected lines, depending on how the individual associations are drawn to relate to each other. By having

students share their cluster patterns with other students in the class, teachers allow students to be exposed to a wide variety of approaches to the subject matter, which might further generate material for writing.

It is very important that students experiment with each of these techniques in order to see how each one works to help generate text and shape a possible approach to a topic. The purpose, after all, of acquiring invention strategies is for students to feel that they have a variety of ways to begin an assigned writing task and that they do not always have to begin at the beginning and work through an evolving draft sequentially until they reach the end.

The use of readings in the writing class is another topic that has generated a great deal of debate among those searching for methodologies which promote improvement in writing proficiency. Before awareness of how to address the writing process in class and of the importance to students of actually doing writing in class, the primary activity of so- called writing classes was actually reading. As mentioned earlier, the traditional paradigm for L1 writing classes was rooted in having students read and discuss texts which they would then go on to write about. When the process approach was first introduced, many writing instructors eliminated the use of readers, and used only texts written by the students themselves as the reading material for the course. The dominant philosophy seemed to be that one learns to write by writing, and that perhaps reading had very little to do with the acquisition of writing. ESL teachers following the developments in L1 writing classrooms also went through a period in which reading played almost no role in the writing classroom. But the pendulum has begun to swing in the opposite direction, and while readings have been reintroduced into the so-called modern process writing class-- both LI and L2--the nature of the readings and their function is viewed quite differently.

Teaching students to produce a successful written text is a complex task which requires simultaneous control over a number of language systems as well as an ability to factor in considerations of the ways the discourse must be shaped for a

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particular audience and a particular purpose. Teaching students to become successful writers is no less a complex task. But it can be a tremendously rewarding one as well.

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