Developing Students' Writing Skills in English - A Process Approach

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Abstract

Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of variables simultaneously. Strong writing skills may enhance students' chances for success. Writing is an essential factor of language. Good writing skills are needed for all the students in order to accomplish their educational and employable requirements. Process Approach stresses writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the publication of a finished text. Process approach is learnercentered in which learners' needs, expectations; goals, learning styles, skills and knowledge are taken into consideration.

Keywords:

Language Development, Process Approach, Writing Skills

Introduction

Nunan says, "Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level, these include control of contents, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraph and text."

Strong writing skills may enhance students' chances for success (Alexander). In discussing the significance of writing to learning, Suleiman also stresses that writing is an essential factor of language. Any reading and language curriculum must think about the multidimensional nature of writing in instructional practices, evaluation procedures, and language development.

Writing is one of the four skills –LSRW (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in language learning. It is the system of written symbols, representing the sounds, syllables or words of language, with different mechanisms - capitalization, spelling and punctuation, word form and function.

Generally, writing is very important that communication is transmitted more through writing than any other type of media. So, Students need effective writing skills to meet their academic needs and workplace requirements.

Students should improve their writing skills, for which teachers have to motivate them to have good writing skills, by providing instruction in writing processes and rules of writing, such as grammar rules and writing practice.

Rationale

Now-a-days, students are lacking writing skills as they spend most of their time in using their equipped smart phones, and they depend on electronic devices or gadgets which provide instant or readymade answers/results available in the internet. They use their valuable time in searching what others are doing, instead of learning the language skills.

Naturally students, having good writing skills, are always successful at expressing their ideas and reaching their goals. They should develop the writing skills for their multiple benefits and success in life. The process of writing is to teach students how to write with coherence, an appropriate grammar structure and an acceptable spelling.

The Importance and Need of Writing Skills

Harmer lays stress on the essentiality of the writing skill saying "The reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right".

JanetEmig described writing as "a unique mode of learning" involving the active participation of both the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Researchers have agreed that writing enhances thinking skills; the higher cognitive functions of analysis and synthesis seem to develop most fully with the support of written language.

Writing is meant for conveying thoughts, ideas, and facts in easy and lucid language. Students have to learn the art of good writing which is essential in order to excel at both academic and professional levels. Good writing skills are needed for all the students in order to accomplish their educational and employable requirements. The following are some of the reasons showing the importance of writing skills:

• To write technical documents, research papers, and put forth the right facts and information.

• In searching and obtaining a job.

• To make presentations and reports, etc.

• For improving communication skills.

• For improving creativity, exploration, and essential for self-understanding

Process Approach

Graham Stanley defines “the process approach treats all writing as a creative act which requires time and positive feedback to be done well. In process writing, the teacher moves away from being someone who sets students a writing topic and receives the finished product for correction without any intervention in the writing process itself”.

“Process Approach stresses writing activities which move learners from the generation of ideas and the collection of data through to the publication of a finished text” -Tribble C

“Process writing evolved as reaction to the product approach”. – Jordan

According to the above definitions, Process approach is learner-centered in which learners’ needs, expectations, goals, learning styles, skills and knowledge are taken into consideration. Process Approach is one of the approaches, such as Lexical Approach, Literature Based Approach, Grammar - Based Approach, Situational Approach, Structural Approach, Genre Approach, Task-Based Approach, and Product Approach in developing the language learning skills. Comparing to other approaches, Process Approach has more advantages. Developing the language learning skills is not like the construction of a wall, but like the growth of a plant, taking its own time. No skill can be mastered overnight. Process Approach involves eight consecutive stages of writing strategies that enable learners to write freely and produce texts of good quality.

Stages of Writing

“Writing is a process which involves several identifiable steps”. – Merriwether

“The Process Approach focuses on the steps involved in creating a piece of work”. – Nuan

According to Steele, Process Approach involves eight stages - Brainstorming, Planning/Structuring, Mind mapping, Writing the first draft, Peer feedback, Editing, Final draft and Evaluation and teachers’ feedback.

• **Stage-1:**

Ideas are generated by brain storming and discussion in Stage-I

• **Stage-2**: Learners extend their ideas into a note form and judge quality and usefulness of ideas.

• **Stage-3:** This stage helps learners make the relationship of ideas understandableorganizing their ideas into mind map or linear form.

• **Stage-4**: In this stage, students prepare first draft in the classroom usually in pairs or groups.

• **Stage-5**: Then drafts are exchanged for students’ reading and responding from each other’s works. In this way, students develop an awareness of the fact.

• **Stage-6:** Considering the feedback of other students, drafts are improved with necessary changes.

• **Stage-7:** Finally, students prepare the final draft with necessary changes.

• **In Stage-8**, the final draft is evaluated by the teachers providing a feedback on it.

Students get benefitted using this process approach as:

• Process Approach is learner - centered.

• Students can show their latent abilities in writing process.

• Learners build up their power of thinking and creativity.

• They understand the importance and value of developing their writing skills.

• They can concentrate on strategies and processes of writing with their own abilities and potentials.

• They are enabled to reach their objective and purpose.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is to realize that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of variables simultaneously. Strong writing skills may enhance students' chances for success. Writing is an essential factor of language. Process approach is learner-centered in which learners' needs, expectations, goals, learning styles, skills and knowledge are taken into consideration. Students are benefitted using this process approach.

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