

Effective strategies to teaching writing

Saidova Mukhayyo Umedilloevna
Associate professor of English linguistics department
Abdurakhmonova Makhfuza Olimovna
Master degree student, Bukhara State University
e-mail-Abduraxmonovamaxfuza3@gmail.com
[+99890 511 52 37](tel:+998905115237)

Abstract: Today, it is very important for everyone to know foreign languages. The world becoming increasingly globalized and bilingual is becoming the need of the hour. Since we have set ourselves the goal of building a competitive country, from now, our graduates of schools, lyceums, colleges and universities must have a perfect knowledge of at least two foreign languages. As it is known, there are four basic skills that every learner should acquire. They are listening, reading, writing and speaking. In this article the most crucial skill, writing, how to teach writing effectively with some strategies in the classroom are going to be discussed. It is impossible to simply describe what a good lesson should consist of due to the many variables that impact learning and understanding, including the individuality of every group of students, there are certain strategies that are widely considered to be helpful. That is why, some of the strategies is going to be discussed in this article.

Key words: writing, teaching writing, learning process, writing activity, to stimulate, games.

Introduction

Writing is not simple process, it is a hard work. However, writing is an opportunity to convey writers ideas and to communicate his views to people. Sometimes, students cannot communicate their ideas systematically to others in a written language. They find that their writing is bad and ineffective. Actually, a writer requires time and some process to make an effective good writing. Teaching writing in a comprehensive school for a long time was given secondary importance. The only exceptions were language universities and schools with in-depth study of a foreign language, where writing was seen as the goal of learning. Written speech written fixation of an oral statement to solve a specific communicative task. At present, the purpose of middle school English teaching is to improve students' skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is the development of comprehensive ability. Students must comprehensively use the knowledge they have learned. So writing is the process of integrated study.

Like most skills, writing requires work and practice to improve. It is a skill that anyone can learn, but excelling at writing takes time and patience. Those who strive to improve have some tasks ahead, but any student can improve English writing skills. The main cause of it is writing well requires a great deal of cognitive energy. On the other hand, it requires a fanaticism for detail to master the mechanics of grammar, punctuation, word choice, and organization.

Materials and methods

The first strategy that can be used in writing classes is *Think Talk Text*. According to Huinker and Laughlin [2015: 82] states that think, talk, text strategy develops the organization of ideas and for the testing those ideas before the students are expected to write. Think, Talk, Text is the teaching strategy to develop, organize and create ideas by thinking, talking, and summary the result of the idea. Think, Talk, Text is a group work for discussion in the classroom. Based on Zulkarnaeni [2011: 149] Think, Talk, Text is one of teaching strategies consist of some members in one group. The members are responsible for the mastery of learning material and can teach to another members in a group. Maulidah [2013] states that the think, talk, text strategy builds in time for thought and reflection and for the organization of ideas and the testing of those ideas before students are expected to write. The flow of communication progresses from students engaging in thought or reflective dialogue with themselves, to talking and sharing ideas with one another, to writing. According to Huinker and Laughlin [2015: 82] states that *Think, Talk, Text* strategy develops the organization of ideas and

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From the definition above, Steve Bowkett [2007] states that there are three technique from of *Think, Talk, Text* as follows: - Think the first technique of this strategy is *Think*. In Think, students are given the topics related with the basic competence in the lesson plan. Students are asked to think their ideas about the topics given. - *Talk* in the *Talk*, students are divided into groups. After they join in group, they share their ideas based on what they think before. Another students listen and respond the ideas. After finished, students conclude the result of the discussion in group. - *Text* after the students get the conclusion, they come back in their own seats. They continue to the last step, Text. In the *Text*, the students are asked to write or result by using their own words. The ideas and the conclusion from the previous steps just help them to complete sentences into text. While Yamin and Ansari [2009] states that there are steps of *Think Talk Text*. First, Students reading a text and make notes about what they have read (*Think*), then discuss with their group. Second, the students do interaction and collaboration with their group to discuss the notes (*Talk*). The students are using their own words to explain ideas in their group. Third, the students express the result of discussion in form written text (*Text*). Writing can help the students realize one of learning purpose and measure students understanding the material have learned. Fourth, the last learning activity is make a reflection and conclusion about what they have learned. One of the students from each group presentation their answers, while other group give an idea.

According to Brown [1889] as a method, the implementation of *Think, Talk, Text* has strength in teaching and learning process. Here are the strength of *Think, Talk, Text* strategy: a) students can work together in a group; b) students involve with themselves to think or make a dialogue after reading process; c) students can share their ideas with their friends before writing; d) the use of *Think, Talk, Text* strategy can minimize the students' difficulties in writing, especially in composing procedure text and can help the teacher in teaching writing.

Writing is the most difficult skill that learners of any foreign language may face. To be good at it, learners must give much effort. According to Charles and Jill Hardfield, writing is indeed difficult for several reason, firstly the writer has to decide what information reader needs and how to express this. Secondly, there is linguistics difficulty, because writing requires good grammar and word choice. Thirdly, there is cognitive difficulty, in that students have to organize thought on paper for unknown reader.¹

Results and discussion

To encourage the students in writing, an English teacher plays an important role. The teacher should be patient to support them. He or she has to give them a lot of trainings and practices how to express their ideas. He or she has to find ways of composing writing that is easy for them. By doing so, students will not consider that writing makes them stressed. Recently there some techniques are used in teaching writing, they are:

Music can be very effective way to stimulate a writing activity since it often provokes strong feelings and ideas. There is universality about music which means that much of it is easy for everyone to understand.²

Pictures are often used to present situation for grammar and vocabulary work. As Raimes says that pictures are valuable, too, in that they provide for the use common vocabulary and common language forms.³

Games can be use as a means for teaching writing. By using games, students will be more interested and more active in learning. They will find something new and different from what they usually get in their class. According to Charles and Jill Hardfield, games provide a clear short term achievable aim for students and by incorporating games into learning process it can help them to overcome one of the difficulties mentioned above. The advocate of using game in teaching writing is also of the view that teaching is activity-based and sequential. Game is an activity or sport with rules, a goal, and an element of fun in which people or

¹ Charles and Jill Hardfield, *Writing Games*.(England: Longman,2005). P.

²Jeremy Harmer, *How to Teach Writing*. op.cit. P. 67

³ Ann Raimes, *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. (Oxford: Oxford University Pree, 2000) p.27

teams compete against each other.⁴ Games play an important part in the language learning process generally. When students play a game in a classroom, they assume roles and participate in the decision-making process. The student especially young learners will enjoy the school activities when the teacher includes games in their activities.

There are hundreds of games that can be used in the language teaching. Teacher who understands games is much more likely to be able to find or create games that will help the students learn something without feeling worry. In Games for Language Learning, Andrew Wright, et.al. present many games that can be used in teaching writing; six eyes game, fantasy story, bingo, kim's game, twenty-question game, etc.⁵

Twenty-question is one of the simple questioning game. Here one player thinks of a person, place or thing, and the other players must guess what it is. Each player is allowed to ask up to twenty-question to act as clues in helping guess the word. It means twenty-question is a game in which a person thinks of an object, place, or thing, and then everyone else gets to ask questions about it until they get it right. By asking question such as Is it an animal? Is it a vegetable? Is it a mineral? , a player can narrow the choices of what the word might be. This a an effective game to widen learners' outlook and to be more active during the class.

Students, particularly those at the beginner level, need ample time to think about the content before diving into the actual writing process. Emphasize the importance of brainstorming as a way to collect their thoughts and aid them in their writing. Engage students in different kinds of brainstorming activities, going beyond "write down what comes to mind." Consider *Think-Pair-Share* as a framework for brainstorming, where students take time to think independently about the topic, share their ideas with their peers, and then share aloud to a larger group. Typically, the sharing is done orally, but you could also consider the independent writing portion of the activity as "sharing" with a larger audience, just in written form.

The next is *I do, You do, We do* sequence is a useful model for teaching writing. It means: *I*-teacher models how to do it, *We*-teacher leads guided/shared session with children, *You*-children complete own example. The "*I*" stage is often missed out during modelling as teachers too quickly take ideas from children. It is often a result of teachers asking questions of themselves out loud-children naturally want to answer them and contribute with their own ideas. Teachers should take time just write in front of the children without their input before moving on to a shared piece. But, it is not just as the writing process that should be modelled: all stages should be modelled, preferably using the *I/We/You* approach. To sum up, this structured teaching method is particularly useful when introducing students to completely new material, method, technique, word or idea. It helps to scaffold the learning process, avoiding overloading student's working memory. The framework involves moving through the stages of teacher modelling, guided practice, and independent practice. It allows teachers to guide students through the academic spectrum, supporting novice learners to develop a deeper level of understanding and engage with their own learning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, writing helps our students learn. How? First, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idiom, and vocabulary that we have been teaching our students. Second, when our students write, they also have a chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond what they have just learned to say, to take risks. Third, when they write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language, the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eye, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning. The use of *Think, Talk, Text, I do, You do, We do, games* and *music* strategy can minimize the students' difficulties in writing, especially in composing procedure text and can help the teacher in teaching writing and also they are useful models for teaching writing while its allows teachers to guide students through the academic spectrum, supporting novice learners to develop a deeper level of understanding and engage with their own learning.

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