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Teaching writing must involve both process and product

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Abstract: A good composition is the product that gets ready only after thinking a lot and artistically putting these thoughts in order to make them have sense. Writing doesn't include just reading and then putting down some important facts or copying out from different sources, but telling the generally educated adult audience something new, narrate him/her an interesting story, argue with him/her about one or another thing and make him/her change his/her mind. The current research is about the effectiveness of planning stage in the process of writing. This research deals with the first two stages that is brainstorming for planning stage and writing the first draft. The aim of the paper is to show the value of the pre-writing stage and to share with the techniques that aid learners in better understanding of the task and produce a qualitative piece of writing. Classroom writing, error analysis, and stylistic focus are features of many product-writing approaches. Considering the structure of the class as a whole, the dichotomy between process and product breaks down: not only are both approaches harmonious in some respects, they may actually be balancing. Only the person who is good at writing can really love this subject.

Keywords: process writing, brain-storming, pre-writing, draft, feedback, error

Teaching is a process adapting the long-term curricular goals to the minute-by-minute changing conditions in each class. Teachers in particular need to be keenly aware of the struggles students go through in the process of writing in a foreign language. For instance, the researcher herself came across the situation many times that proves 'getting started' in writing is the most difficult: students chew their nails, suck their pens, scratch their heads etc. till the time they eventually start writing. The small observation has shown that, only after getting started nothing can stop the writers. The only thing that's needed is to call the ideas and starting to put them down on the sheet of paper, the organization and content can later be adopted and changed. **Virginia Woolf** (1929) says: As teachers, we all might have come across this situation many times: a student who had a lot of free time on the weekend comes to your class having written three essays and she has made the same three mistakes on all the essays she has handed in. Here comes the question – is it the quantity or the quality of the papers which is important? To provide an answer to this question, we need to analyze the following questions - what we generally do when we write and what we ask our students to do when giving a writing assignment in class. What we need to do is to plan what we are writing, who we are writing to, how we write. Once we have planned, we start writing. What we write for the first time is never perfect. When we read it for a second time, we see that some places need clarification, so we

write it again. We keep editing and proofreading our drafts until we reach a final product. This is what a process approach is about.

Though this process seems linear, in the real world, we keep changing our ideas while writing; thus, we may need to go back and forth between these stages. Apparently, enthusiastic as the above mentioned student may seem, he/she never went further than writing only a first draft. Most probably, if she had proof-read and edited her draft, she would have realized her own mistake and refrained from repeating the same mistake. There are scientific reasons as to the benefits of process writing as well. Research has shown that when feedback is given on the draft, it is more useful since the students find the opportunity to correct their mistake by writing again. With little effort, it is possible to apply process writing in our classes. Instead of giving the writing topic to the students and asking for the final product, we can help the students go through the stages of process writing. Process writing consists of the following stages: brain storming, planning, writing the rough draft, editing, proof reading, and the final product.

Brian Douglas (1999), *Brainstorming* – prewriting technique of focusing on a particular subject or topic and freely jotting down any and all ideas which come to the mind without limiting or censoring information. Ideas may be single words, phrases, ideas, details, examples, descriptions, feelings, people, situations, etc.

Clustering - prewriting technique of focusing on a particular topic or subject and freely writing down ideas, words, phrases, details, examples, feelings, situations, descriptions, etc.

Questioning - prewriting technique of asking Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

A *mind map* is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. Especially in British English, the terms "spider gram" and "spider graph" are more common, but they can cause confusion with the term "spider diagram" used in mathematics and logic. Mind maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as an aid to studying and organizing information, solving problems, making decisions, and writing.

As **John** and **Sandra Scarry** say on their book entitled “The Writer’s Workplace”: “Errors are a window or mirror on the writing process”. For instance, learning through mistakes makes it perfect. In process writing there can be several drafts on which an instructor can evaluate the organization and content of the composition, and edit on mechanics and sentence structure. In Uzbekistan, particularly, in Uzbek groups, students are not even aware of process writing -- they write one draft in a particular period of class time – and that’s it – this same sample will be checked and marked. As this research shows on the pages below, it really decreases the quality of the academic piece of writing of the students. A good revision system provides as much information to students about his/her writing as possible. In book “Write for College” **Sebranek**, **Kemper**, and **Meyer** state that “Writing process includes:

- collecting and focusing thoughts (prewriting);

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- generating an initial version of the writing (drafting);
- improving on the writing (revising);
- preparing it for submission (editing/proofreading)”.

As we see, all sources indicate the planning stage as the first and the most important stage of the writing process. In order to collect the ideas student can:

- list five WH questions (and while brainstorming try to answer them);
- do mind mapping (illustrate or put down all the ideas concerning the current topic);
- carry out a research (questionnaires, needs analysis reports, observations, surveys etc.);
- specifying the topic (too general topics can be very broad and student won't be able to focus on all the issues raised in that topic); and
- creating a plan for writing.

Lennet Daigle and **Allen Towery** (2008) “A successful writer must understand the writing assignment itself, whether it is self-imposed (letter, job-application), given by a teacher (essay), or required by an employer (report, CV), he/she should consider style and format appropriate for both material itself and readers”. In any case the writer should keep in mind the audience who he/she is writing for. If it is a personal letter to a friend, then the style of writing can be more free, its tone and vocabulary more informal. If it is an essay, doesn't matter – narration, definition, cause and effect etc. – the writer shouldn't limit him/herself as writing only for a teacher, but for a GEAA (General Educated Adult Audience) because teacher and the student can be of the same nationality, background and culture; so the student writer will not pay much attention to the explanation of stereotypes that are particular only for this or that nation, to the importance of cultural manner in the digestion of the essay's topic, or to the orientation of one historical place that's situated in the same country the teacher and the student is living – which is totally wrong, because another reader will not understand these essential components and may refuse further looking through of document.

According to **Tricia Hedge** (1995), many teachers and students would recognize the writing period as times of sighing, pencil-chewing, and foot-shuffling agony. **Harold Rosen** (1981) who writes about a school's curriculum project on writing in Britain explains it in this way: “The writer is a lonely figure cut off from the stimulus and corrective of listeners. He must be a predictor of reactions and act of his predictions. He writes with one hand tied behind his back, being robbed of gesture. He is robbed too of the tone of his voice and the aid of clues the environment provides. He is condemned to monologue; there's no one to help out, to fill the silences, put words in his mouth, or make encouraging noises”. Compared with speech, effective writing requires a number of things: a high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information; a high degree of accuracy so that there's 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. One approach to writing is to look at instances of writing and to analyze the features of written texts. This will tell us something about what it is that students have to produce. It is possible to build up a list of the “skills” that writers need. It would include:

- getting the grammar right
- having a range of vocabulary
- punctuating meaningfully
- using the conventions of layout correctly
- 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.

In the ‘getting ready to write’ stage, students seem to have several problems with motivation to write, thinking what to say, and organizing ideas before writing. Making mind maps is a strategy for note-making before writing, in other words scribbling down ideas about the topic and developing those ideas as the mind makes associations. Imagining dialogues is a particularly useful planning device for writing letters.

Kathryn Beasley (2001): “It is very important to be organized to make things clear”. All good writers are “students of their game”; always ready to learn something new. Effective writing presents interesting and valuable information about a specific subject. It has a clear message or purpose. The ideas are thoroughly developed and hold the reader’s attention (stimulating ideas). In terms of basic structure, good writing has a clearly developed beginning, middle and ending. Within the text, each main point is developed with examples, explanations, definitions, specific details and so on. For other writing projects, you may know only a little about your subject and will need to do some gathering. Gathering refers to the collecting and planning you do during prewriting.

Strategies for planning writing:

1. Gathering your thoughts. Free writing. Write freely for at least 5-10 minutes, exploring your subject from a number of different angles. Then, you plan how you will use these details in your writing. Gathering is especially important when you are developing research papers, reports, essays, and so on.

2. Listing. Jot down things that you already know about your subject, and the questions you have about it. Keep your list going as long as you can.

3. Clustering. Create a cluster with your specific subject as nucleus word.

4. Analyzing. Think carefully about a subject by answering the following types of questions:

- What parts does my subject have? (Break it down).
- What do I see, hear, or feel when I think about it? (Describe it).
- What is it similar to? What is it different from? (Compare it.)
- What are its strengths and weaknesses? (Evaluate it).
- What can I do with it? How can I use it? (Apply it.)

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5. Researching. Reading. Refer to nonfiction books, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, and so on, for information about your subject.

6. Viewing and listening. Watch relevant television programs and videos or listen to tapes about your subject.

7. Surfing. Explore the internet for information about your writing ideas.

8. Experiencing. Visit or watch your subject in action to learn about it. If your subject involves an activity, participate in it. Talking to others. Interviewing. Interview an expert about your subject. Meet the expert in person, communicate by phone, or send questions to be answered in writing.

9. Discussing. Talk with your classmates, teachers, or other people to see what they know about your subject. Take notes to help you remember the important things they say. Planning your writing. Gathering details helps you learn about your subject. Planning how to use the details helps you get ready to write. The steps that follow will guide you to view the details you have collected. Think of an interesting focus. Organize the details in the most effective way to support or develop your focus.

According to **Sebernak**, "The writing process is really all about effort. If you put in the time, and do necessary prewriting, drafting, and revising, you'll almost always be pleased with the final results of your writing".

As **Jeremy Hammer** (2001) accepts: "The product-oriented approach to the teaching of writing emphasizes mechanical aspects of writing, such as focusing on grammatical and syntactical structures and imitating models. This approach is primarily concerned with "correctness" and form of the final product. Moreover, this approach fails to recognize that people write for an audience and for a purpose and that ideas are created and formulated during the process of writing. However, the process-oriented approach emphasizes that writing itself is a developmental process that creates self-discovery and meaning.

While the mechanical aspects of writing are important, they should not interfere with the composing process. This composing process requires much revision and rewriting. The teacher intervenes and guides students during the composing process but initially does not emphasize "correctness" and the final product; the emphasis on "correctness" and the final product comes only toward the very end of the writing process (and, often, a major concern with "correctness" is put off until towards the middle or even end of the writing course). Instead of worrying about form, students concentrate on conveying a written message. Hence the product of writing will improve with the discovery involved in composing.

Product-oriented approaches to writing largely concern the forms of the written products that students compose. The writing exercises applied in this approach typically deal with sentence-level writing and paragraph-level organization. Students are often given a framework which illustrates a pattern of rhetorical organization; then, they are asked to fit their ideas into this framework. Both the content and the form which the students deal with are largely controlled by the teacher. Since the main focus of these approaches is on written form, grammar is emphasized and a particular effort is made to avoid errors.

Process-oriented approaches concern the process of how ideas are developed and formulated in writing. Writing is considered a process through which meaning is created. This approach characterizes writing as following a number of processes: First, a writer starts writing ideas as drafts. Subsequently, he checks to see whether the writing and the organization makes sense to him or not. After that, he checks whether the writing will be clear to the reader. This approach focuses on how clearly and efficiently a student can express and organize his ideas, not on correctness of form. Students are first asked to go through such writing processes, trying organize and express their ideas clearly. The assumption is that what the student as a writer is going to say will become clearer through these processes. Students are also taught writing devices used in marking the organization and in making the general coherence clearer.

Teaching writing must involve both process and product. Teachers should first focus on the organization of the writing. As the next step, they should deal with grammatical problems seen in writing. When students are not good at organizing their ideas, the teacher should deal with this before moving on to grammatical mistakes (presumably, later in the term). This is for several reasons, among them that better organization often leads to the reduction of other errors and, of course, the clear expression of ideas is the major point of writing”.