

Original Article

Innovative Pedagogical Approaches for Strengthening Writing Skills in Secondary School Learners

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Abstract

Although many teachers voice concerns about the challenges of teaching writing, it remains an essential aspect of education due to its profound importance and value. Developing strong writing skills does not happen overnight; it requires experience, patience, and a thoughtful approach. Writing is much more than simply putting words on paper; it is a process that demands careful preparation, ongoing revision, and the clear expression of ideas. Writing holds a central role in communication and is woven into nearly every aspect of our daily lives. It engages both our auditory and visual abilities, strengthens memory, and encourages independent thinking. Unlike speaking, which often happens spontaneously, writing calls for accuracy in grammar, appropriateness in expression, and the ability to consider the reader's perspective. The act of writing is systematic and involves organizing thoughts in a clear and precise way. This paper explores practical strategies for teaching writing effectively to secondary school students learning English. It examines the four foundational language skills; students' attitudes toward their writing abilities, the qualities of good handwriting, and a variety of exercises that can help young learners become more confident and capable writers.

Keywords: Teaching Strategies, Writing Skill, Secondary School Learners, and English

Four Basic Skills

Four basic skills are crucial in teaching a language equally in effective communication. These include:

Aural-Oral Skills

- Listening
- Speaking

Graphic-Motor Skills

- Reading
- Writing

All four skills are dependent on one another and interact in real communication. Both speaking and writing are means of expression. As said by Lord Bacon, "Reading makes a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man." Here, one can see that this shows how writing helps to arrange ideas and bring clarity. Writing is the practical side of learning a language. It uses written signs on a piece of paper to visually represent speech. But speaking and writing are used in different contexts and have different social roles. One learns punctuation, paragraphing, capital letters, underlining, word choice, and lexicographic conventions including replacing "may" with "possible" and other words. Words in the same order help you make it clearer. And so that is why the essence of writing goes beyond letter-work and word-spelling to learn to behave from the conventions of all these things. That is why a majority of people consider writing the most difficult language skill to learn.

Attitude about Writing Ability

Not everyone uses the same level of writing ability in every case. While there is merit to everyone's opinion with regard to the concept of writing ability, there is no single comprehensive view.

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From one lesson about writing to another, the concepts of writing ability for you grow. At the end of this part you should have learned to view the way personal attitudes toward writing affect the experiences one has while writing. People assume that being effective at writing is merely a matter of knowing how to spell, punctuate, grammatically sound. Critics often ask, "Why can't people write anymore?" when they find errors. But if you stop and think, you come to realize that writing is much more than checking to avoid making errors — it is inextricably tied to human temperament.

Characteristics of Good Handwriting

- Straightforward: Good handwriting is easy to read because it makes sense to the writer, and it demonstrates one's clear mind.
- Differential Forms: Different letters have different shapes, and so does writing better handwriting.
- Simplicity: The writing must be simple, removing unnecessary repetitions and embellishments.
- Spacing: Good handwriting requires that letters, words and lines should occupy a consistent space.
- Size and Shape: Letters need to be regular in size and uniform.
- Nice: Handwriting should be attractive with neat lines, good shape, large and in proportion and with spacing properly, all in straight lines.
- Speed: Good handwriting takes time (it does with practice) to do it right.

Exercises for Practices for Developing Writing Skills

(1.) Composition

Children start writing composition work early and are getting into composition work in childhood, starting out on bigger topics and writing of increasingly complex papers. "Almost any written exercise is, after all, composition," Champa says. Composition-a sequence of sentences organized around one idea. It is a fundamental component in the language work and should be taught as a tool to develop language proficiency

(2.) Writing Composition:

In order to write a composition, you must recall the right structures and vocabulary.

- Spellings
- Punctuation
- Imagination
- Organization of the Ideas

(3.) Composition types:

The written composition is divided into two types:

- Guided Composition
- Free Composition

(a.) Guided Composition

With guided composition, students get all structures and vocabulary as well as ideas to articulate. The teacher stays on the learner's side until the phase is completed and slowly tones in the guidance as the L2 gets better.

Processes in a Co-Written Approach:

- Topic selection by teacher is very careful.
- Discussions of all the details of the topic in class and writing down important points on the board.
- Choosing the method for effectively completing the topic in practice
- Using vocabulary, deciding what structures to choose and word choice.
- Directing kids with all their written material.
- Guided Composition methods:
- Substitution Tables: This method facilitates students with generating sentences, and working on composition.
- Transcription: The teacher puts words, sentences, and paragraphs on the board so that students can copy them, which helps with spelling, handwriting, and note-taking skills.
- Dictation: At a relaxed conversational speed, teacher dictates the sentence. Students must stay attentive and record them down, practising writing, note-taking and quick writing.
- Transforming Sentences: Students are given questions or statements and are required to convert them to alternative forms. For example:
- Is Seema a good singer? (Question) - Seema is a good singer. (Statement)
- Change the voice.
- Reproduction of Situations: Teacher creates and describes the situation and they talk about it with students. They pay attention carefully and later sound out sentences, orally and in writing.
- Reproducing a Picture Description: Students can see pictures of what the teacher says. When they get older, they write down descriptions of those pictures.
- Mimes: Teacher does something silently, while students write sentences describing what teacher did for them.

- Question and answer: The teacher asks questions, explaining previously taught topics to students. The students respond in what a composition is written on the board.
- Supply of Clues/Keywords: The teacher presents a thought in conversation and offers clues. Students construct a piece based on these clues.
- Re-telling a Story: Students listen to a story and repeat it out loud and then write it down. It is generally more of an exercise for advanced classes.

(b.) Free Composition

In free composition, the teacher gives students little guidance. They freely express their thoughts about topics of interest, which may be descriptive, narrative, or imaginative. However we should not introduce the process too early, as this is structured and vocabulary needs to be mastered. To prepare students to take what they might learn and create writing in free writing in their mother tongue, write in their mother tongue. Students' ideas are better organized by writing in their native language.

Free Composition Exercise:

- First the teacher should choose topics that are simple. Regular practice for students to write their own compositions is important, so students will write at least one paragraph a day as practice.
- Get students to report back on school activities, or review an essay or story they like. I would suggest that students feel free to vocalize their opinions in a written form. Teachers can write a story title and students can write inventive stories out of their imagination.
- Letter writing: This is an important tool for language learning. Letter writing has its own benefits that can be motivational for learners. A teacher should describe various elements of a letter, including how to start and end a letter.
- Summarizing and note-taking: After learning free composition, students can summarize their work. Students at higher levels study multiple texts and require clarifying the ideas. Students are taught creative writing to strengthen their ability to use the writing to present their thoughts in reviews, stories, dialogues, etc. They can use this work for publication in school magazines, or submit it to publications.
- Paragraph Writing: Paragraphs provide continuity in writing. This is in the form of essays, reports, and letters for example. That means students must learn to write effective paragraphs.

The characteristics of a good paragraph include:

- Unity: Each paragraph should address only one idea. Generally, paragraphs will have a topic sentence that holds the main idea.
- Structure: Paragraphs should be well organized. Types of organization include exemplification, narration (time-sequenced events), and comparison or contrast. Coherence: each sentence should naturally lead to the rest.
- Dialogues: Dialogues are elements of spoken English; however, they can also appear in compositions. They need to be straightforward and reflect daily conversations. In other situations, such as novels, dialogues are more creative. Learn to create direct dialogues in elementary school and middle school.

(4.) Diaries

A diary is a personal account. It doesn't have to come in Standard English either. We often have our very own hand abbreviations we use when writing a diary. Thoughts and feelings can often be voiced in their most fragmentary form. The wording in a diary is akin to a telegram

(5.) Filling in Forms

In simple life, we are confronted with filling out forms all the time—application forms, reservation forms, money order forms, and so on. Filling forms and completing the list is an essential writing skill that needs vocabulary and attention to detail. Forms can go unfilled due to mistakes. Doing it at an early age instils confidence among students who are moving into the upper grades. A good thing is simple ones like filling in personal information and writing their names, for example. Below Graded Exercises in writing are: Students correct their strokes while writing the letters of the alphabet. Students copy single words from the board, flash cards, or textbooks. Students write sentences based on textbooks and substitution tables. Students produce sentences dictated by the teacher. Students are expected to change sentences: positive/negative, active/passive, declarative/interrogative, and so on. Students complete variable columns in substitution tables and write their own sentences. Students pair sections of sentences and transcribe them. Student's structure and rearrange scrambled sentences, such as, "there on the table a book is." Students write individual sentences as responses to queries, such as, "Are you a student?" or "Did you come to school yesterday?" The students correctly reorder sentences, for example, "There were great friends; one day, while the crow was away, a wicked fox came to the deer. A crow and a deer lived in a forest. The deer lived below it. The crow built her nest in a tree." Students make connected sentences from substitution tables by selecting one from each table. Setting Writing Tasks to Test Assessments of writing skills are also possible with tasks suggested. Internal choices between tasks can also be minimized to establish a common standard for assessment. Assessing students' writing abilities such as writing

paragraphs, writing letters, using flowcharts, writing articles, using information from newspapers, and more are some tasks students may have to complete as part of this evaluation process.

Conclusion

Writing is fundamental to the process of communication, and some students appreciate just how much it requires. Knowing why various factors influence writing skills helps people to not make mistakes and enhance their writing. And by using forms of different kinds of writing .exercises, letters, paragraphs, diaries, reports and more they could then hone their skills. Writing skills need to be evaluated to monitor students' progress like any other such element. The students gain familiarity with different types of scripts which helps to write. This paper presents good teaching strategies for improving the writing level of secondary school English students.

Such as:

1. Four basic skills
2. Attitude towards writing ability
3. Characteristics of a good handwriting
4. Exercises for practices for developing writing skills

It also addresses four main components: attitudes to writing ability, good handwriting characteristics, and methods for refining writing skills.

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