Challenges and Implementing Targeted Approaches in Teaching Writing

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Abstract:

The writing methods course serves as a unique intersection of challenges and rewards within teacher education. While the isolation often experienced by instructors can pose significant hurdles, embracing a more collaborative approach may enhance both teaching support and pedagogical innovation. By focusing on the experiences of those who teach these courses, the field can better understand how to prepare educators for this critical role in shaping future writing teachers. Further research is necessary to explore effective strategies for collaboration and curriculum development that address the complexities inherent in teaching writing methods courses.

Keywords: Writing Process, challenges, teaching tool.

Teaching writing can be a rewarding but challenging endeavor. Here are some common challenges along with effective approaches to address them:

Lack of Confidence: Many students feel insecure about their writing abilities, which can hinder their willingness to participate and take risks. Classrooms often contain students with varying levels of writing proficiency, making it difficult to tailor instruction to meet everyone's needs.

Writer's Block: Students may struggle with generating ideas or organizing their thoughts, leading to frustration and disengagement.

Understanding the Writing Process: Some students may not grasp the stages of writing (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing), which can affect the quality of their work. Students often find it challenging to accept and incorporate feedback, leading to a reluctance to revise their work.

According to Barkley (2012:256) Collaborative writing technique is the technique that student pairs or triads write a formal paper together. Each student contributes at each stage of the writing process, brainstorming ideas, gathering and organizing information, and drafting, revising and editing the

writing. Working together can help students to learn and perform the stages of writing more effectively. So, this technique helps students stay focused on the goal, which is to work together to produce a good writing

Collaborative writing is seen as an effective approach to addressing the challenge of learning to write descriptions, as it leverages students' potential for growth and development. With their inherent abilities and experiences, students can actively construct their own understanding. By incorporating collaborative writing into the learning process, it is anticipated that students will find it easier to generate and express their ideas in descriptive writing. Furthermore, this method is expected to make the teaching and learning experience more dynamic and enjoyable.

Students often face several challenges when it comes to writing. Firstly, many struggle with generating ideas, which can lead to a lack of content. This difficulty in idea generation often makes it hard for them to organize their thoughts logically. They may feel overwhelmed by the belief that writing requires extensive effort in terms of composition and language, which can hinder their confidence and creativity.

Additionally, students might experience:

1. Fear of Judgment: Worrying about how their writing will be perceived can stifle their willingness to express themselves.

2. Limited Vocabulary: A restricted vocabulary can make it challenging to articulate ideas effectively.

3. Understanding Structure: Many students are unsure of how to structure their writing, which can lead to disorganized essays or descriptions.

4. Editing and Revising: Some students find it difficult to critique their work or understand the importance of revision, which is crucial for improving writing quality.

By addressing these issues through supportive strategies, such as collaborative writing and guided practice, educators can help students overcome their writing challenges and develop more confidence in their abilities.

The opinion of Tarigan (1990:187) as most teachers cannot present written material in an attractive, inspirational and creative way even though the teaching techniques chosen and practiced by teachers in the implementation of writing learning greatly affect student achievement. Strategy is one of the methods that must be used by teachers in teaching writing. Useful to help students be interested in the lesson the teacher will explain. There are several strategies for teaching writing. One of them is the collaborative writing strategy.Teachers often approach writing in various ways, sometimes relying on intuition without fully understanding how to effectively address writing in their lessons. The following paragraphs will outline some of these approaches.

Writing can be widely defined from several perspectives. In the language learners' perspective, writing can be classified as productive skills besides speaking. Writing produces written language, while speaking can produce spoken language; both of them are very different. The difference between speaking and writing comes from the characteristics. Weigle (2002, p. 15) provides the characteristics that differences written language from spoken language in terms of the permanency, production time, distance, orthography, complexity, formality and vocabulary.

Creme & Lea (2008) stated that earlier, writing was performed and considered a solo practice focusing on the correctness of sentence. Nowadays, effective writing is "a complex process composed of many different kinds of activities that eventually result in that product" (Nightingale, 2000, p.135).

Maley (2012) compares and contrasts the main characteristics of creative writing with the characteristics of expository writing in his articles creative writing for students and teachers as he assumes these two styles of writing are in contrast to each other. Regarding Expository writing, he further says, it "rests on a framework of externally imposed rules and conventions. This range is from grammatical and lexical accuracy to specific genre constraints. The aim of expository writing is to be logical, consistent and impersonal and to convey the content as unambiguously as possible to the reader" (Maley, 2012). However, Creative Writing according to Maley (2012), "often proceeds by stretching the rules of the language to breaking point, testing how far it can go before the language breaks down under the strain of innovation."

While there are significant challenges associated with creative writing in language learning, its effectiveness as a teaching tool cannot be overstated. By addressing the difficulties students face—such as lack of confidence and fear of judgment—educators can create a supportive environment that nurtures creativity. Ultimately, integrating creative writing into language curricula not only enhances linguistic skills but also fosters personal growth and engagement among students. Future research could further explore specific strategies for overcoming these challenges and maximizing the benefits of creative writing in diverse classroom settings.

Writing approaches play a vital role in every writing lesson. ESL teachers need to carefully select the appropriate approach for each specific lesson for several important reasons. Using the right approach in a writing classroom is key to achieving successful outcomes. On the other hand, choosing an unsuitable approach can make lessons overwhelming for ESL learners and lead to frustration for teachers, despite the extensive effort put into planning and instruction. In other words, it can demotivate both teachers and students.. Next, adapting an appropriate approach in the classroom is important depending on the goal set by the teacher. For instance, beginners with very limited proficiency should be exposed to product-based approach as they need model or examples to begin their writing journey.

Without an approach, the writing classroom will move in multiple directions thus the goal set for the particular lesson will not be achievable. Hence, writing approaches are important to meet the goals of the writing (Scott 1996)Moreover, incorporating various types of approaches allows students to experience a range of methods. This exposure gives students the opportunity to identify and apply the appropriate approach in future writing, depending on their writing purpose. Students who are familiar with these approaches are more likely to produce high-quality writing.

It is crucial for ESL teachers to thoroughly understand their students' proficiency levels before choosing the most suitable writing approach for the classroom. Students with an average proficiency level might benefit from using the process, process genre, or process-product approaches. With appropriate scaffolding, along with teacher and peer reviews, their writing can improve. On the other hand, very weak students may benefit from a product-based approach, allowing them to imitate a model, become familiar with it, and produce a similar text with some support. The studies mentioned above demonstrate that the careful selection of approaches leads to positive outcomes.

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