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МЕТОДЫ СОВЕРШЕНСТВОВАНИЯ АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОГО ПИСЬМА СТУДЕНТОВ БАКАЛАВРА

Эта статья в основном посвящена концепции академического письма или методам улучшения письма студентов на университетском уровне. В этой статье будет обсуждаться важность академического письма; дать некоторые определения, виды и классификации. Также будет обсуждаться использование этих методов в академическом письме среди изучающих английский язык и роль этих методов в продвижении процесса изучения языка. С течением времени развиваются методы улучшения письменной речи учащихся, и именно они исследуются в этой статье. В документе также будет представлена информация о препятствиях, с которыми могут столкнуться студенты университетов при написании заданий для своих академических курсов, что приведет исследователей к лучшему пониманию и направит их на праведный путь при проведении исследований в этой области. В конце статьи определяется понятие «хороший академический писатель», объясняя взаимосвязь между «хорошим академическим писателем» и эффективными методами улучшения академического письма в университетах.

Key words: *Академическое письмо; эффективные техники; студенты университета.*

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**TECHNIQUES FOR IMPROVING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS’
ACADEMIC WRITING**

This paper is mainly about the concept of academic writing or techniques in improving student writing at the university level. This paper will discuss the importance of academic writing; give some definitions, types and classifications. It will also discuss the use of these techniques in academic writing among English language learners and the role of these techniques in promoting the process of language learning. Over the time, progress of techniques in improving student writing is developed and they are explored precisely in this paper. The paper will also provide information on the obstacles that university students may face while they write assignments for their academic courses, which will lead researchers to better understanding, and to guide them to the righteous way when making research in this filed. At the end, this paper defines the notion of Good Academic Writer explaining the relationship between Good Academic Writer and effective techniques in improving academic writing at universities.

Key words: *Academic writing; effective techniques; university students.*

Introduction

Writing is one of the four communicative skills and it is one of the core courses in English language teaching departments at almost all universities around the world. However it is one most difficult course as the writing is seen as a “torture instrument” (Whitaker, 2009, p.2) by most of the students.

Writing in university has been regarded as one of the complex English skills that require thoroughly ways in order to produce a highly rich piece of writing. Writing is also one important skill for academic success. It therefore, needs a lot of efforts on making the students write better. These efforts will be potential when they go to the right target. However, most of the effort is aimed at skill building and grammar instruction. Writing in university is not only about producing a grammatically correct piece of writing, but the writing should show a well communicative writing that can deliver what the writer intended to convey. More development on writing teaching approaches have been growing in the recent decade, such as “portfolio assessment, peer evaluation, conferencing with instructors, communicative approaches, computer writing software, mail exchange, etc.” (Lee, 2003, p.112). Those approaches have been underpinned by researches that show their effectiveness on teaching and learning. Yet, most writing instructors still cannot give up conservative grammatical error correction and cannot successfully apply the new approaches mentioned above. The gap between research findings and the practice in real classrooms never seems to be filled. Accordingly, the cause of students’ writing difficulties has not yet been discovered.

A number of researches on English as Foreign Language (EFL) writing have been conducted. Those researches view EFL writing as a complex and continuing process that need some remedies to overcome. In this case, students not only deal with writing techniques but more serious than that. This is what we call writing apprehension or anxiety where students have problems with their negative affective domain toward writing. Daly and Miller (1975) coined this term but later the most common researcher on this field is Lee (2003) and Krashen

(2002). Apprehension can be triggered by several factors; namely, students' traumatic past experiences in writing, lower expectations and negative responses from teachers, and the lack of writing competence (Daly, 1979 & 1985; Daly & Wilson, 1983; Duke, 1980; Harvley-Felder, 1978; Miller, 1975 as cited in Lee, 2003). It can be assumed that those factors are from learning and teaching experience the students get. Teacher should know that the learning experience that the students will have would eventually determine the success of students in learning. Continuous and extreme grammar correction will undeniably influences students affective in learning which later contribute to the students' competent performance. Ineffective teaching is also related to this issue.

Literature Review

Academic writing is one of the essential courses at the university level, as "Most international students need to write essays and reports for exams and coursework. Yet writing good academic English is one of the most demanding tasks students face" (Bailey, 2011, p.i). Academic writing is also seen as one of the important skills in student success. "In a recent survey, academic staff at the University of Essex identified the interrelated skills of writing and reasoning as the two most important skills for success in higher education; when asked which skills students most often lacked, writing was again at the top of their list" (Burnett, 2008, p.i).

Research methods

The study used a case study perspective striving to understand the issue under the observation in its natural setting with a particular attention to contextual conditions and experience of the participants (Lacono, Brown, & Holtham, 2009). To such an end, the selection of the research site was made according not only to the suitability of the case for the research aim, but also to the typicality hence the

significance of TNIWL as the only higher educational institution specialized in language education in Turkmenistan. Undeniably, TNIWL prepares future language teachers, and the most diversified in terms of possibilities of academic options in the country, it is essential for students to learn academic writing not only for their university assignments, but also for their future careers.

The researcher made use of field observation, classroom teaching and student survey. In this context, interviewing was also conducted in a form of informal conversations with some teacher and student participants. As for data collection, they were particularly related to documents that were continuously collected during the entire period of the researcher's study programme. Therefore, informal conversations, practical teaching and data gathered throughout the study served as data collection strategies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006, p. 332 cited in Twagilimana, 2017, p.81).

Discussions and Some Suggestions

The relationship of writing apprehension and students' writing proficiency has also been researched widely. The link between students' writing and their apprehension, attitude and perhaps self-efficacy is believed to cause students' poor performance in writing. In this case a question "How can a teacher help his or her students to become better writers in a writing course?" arises vertically. There are a variety of techniques which a teacher can apply as a writing teacher, as well as ways of creating assignments and assessments that will aid students in this academic effort.

Many of the writing techniques we take for granted are not at all obvious to our students. And yet, these issues arise so frequently that there are resources available for teachers to share with their students.

Some Useful Techniques

Provide Student Examples as Model Paper.

Time to time or each term a teacher should make a nice collection of student writings. After evaluating this collection, the teacher should use examples of good student writing to discuss with present students. Also discuss what makes these pieces of writing effective. This helps students identify the elements of good work for particular assignments. This, in turn, supports them become aware of these elements in their own work. Diverse models of student work also illustrate that there are different ways to approach the same assignment, thus offering students some sense of creative scope.

Demonstrate Your Writing Process.

It may also be helpful for a teacher to share with students his or her process in approaching writing tasks. For example, he or she can tell students:

What questions you ask yourself before you begin (you might, for example, ask: Who is my audience? What am I trying to convince them of? What do I want to say, and what evidence can I use to back it up?).

How you go about writing (Do you outline ideas on piece paper? write an outline? hold off on writing your introductory paragraph until you have written the body of the paper?).

Design Assignments that Offer Appropriate Practice with Feedback.

Of course, one of the best ways for students to become better writers is through practice. However, not all practice is equally effective. An important way to help students develop as writers, even in a course not specially designed for this purpose, is to match the writing assignments to the students' skill level and offer practice on the aspects of writing where they can benefit.

Embed Milestones.

It is also helpful to include milestones into an assignment so that students submit either preliminary drafts (so they can incorporate feedback in their subsequent revisions) or components of a larger paper (so they avoid leaving the entire assignment to the last minute).

Require Drafts.

Few people are able to turn out high-quality writing in first drafts. For most people, good writing requires rereading, rethinking, and sometimes fairly extensive revising. Many students, however, misunderstand or underestimate what good writing involves, believing that it is a simple linear process when, in fact, it is complex and challenging. Many students leave writing assignments to the last minute, expecting to be able to sit down and rapidly turn out a good paper. Thus, they may not give themselves enough time to re-examine premises, adjust the organizational scheme, refine their arguments, etc. Requiring drafts forces students to build in appropriate time frames for their work.

Create Rubrics.

A detailed scoring guide helps students to recognize the component parts of a writing task and understand how their competence will be assessed in each of these areas. A good rubric helps students to see what comprises high quality writing and to identify the skills they will need to perform well. You might want to provide your rubric to students along with the assignment so they know what the criteria are in advance and can plan appropriately.

Recognize Cultural Differences.

Besides the differences between skilled and unskilled writers, there are cultural differences that often manifest themselves in the written work of non-native speakers of English. Some non-native speakers generally provide lengthier treatments of historical context, minimizing their own arguments.

Writing Clinic for non-native English speakers.

Be explicit with students about the behaviours of skilled writers.

Understanding the behavioural differences between skilled and unskilled writers can help us work more effectively with students, even to “warn” them in advance of potential difficulties to be avoided.

Skilled/successful writers

Unskilled/unsuccessful writers

Consider the writing problem in its complexity, including issues of audience, purpose, and context.

Consider the writing problem narrowly, primarily in terms of topic.

Outline writing assignment according to the needs of the audience.

Have little idea of audience.

Skilled/successful writers are dedicated to the writing.

Unskilled/unsuccessful writers care little about the writing.

Skilled/successful writers are less easily satisfied with first drafts. They think of revision as finding the line of argument. They revise extensively at the level of structure and content.

Unskilled/unsuccessful writers are more easily satisfied with the first draft.

They think of revision as changing words or crossing out and throwing away. They revise only at the level of single word or sentence.

Skilled/successful writers are able to pay selective attention to various aspects of the writing task, depending on the stage of the writing process.

Unskilled/unsuccessful writers often tried to do everything perfectly on the first draft. Get stuck on single word choices or on punctuation, even at early stages. They tend to believe that writing well is a gift you either have or don't have.

Sharing this information with students in advance of writing assignments can aid them in the writing process.

Conclusion

Today, there is a growing demand that students need strong writing skills to succeed in the workplace and to fully participate in society. However, educators passionately vary on the best ways to teach those skills. Some pay greater attention on the fundamentals of grammar: building vocabulary, identifying parts of speech, and mastering punctuation. Others consider that students need more opportunities to develop their writerly voice through creative expression and work that allows them to make connections between great literature and their personal lives.

In fact, writing requires making choices. In this case, teachers can help students most by teaching them how to see and make choices when working with ideas. They can introduce students to a process of generating and sorting ideas by teaching them how to use exercises to build ideas. With an understanding of how to discover and arrange ideas, they will have more success in getting their ideas onto the page in clear prose. Through critical thinking exercises, students move from a vague or felt sense about course material to a place where they can make explicit the choices about how words represent their ideas and how they might best arrange them. While some students may not recognize some of these activities as “writing,” they may see that doing this work will help them do the thinking that leads to easier, stronger papers. (The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill).

In this paper the researcher tried to focus on problems of students in academic writing and suggested few techniques for teachers in order to improve one of the neglected academic skill – writing.

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