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Teaching Writing Right: Scaffolding Writing for EFL/ESL Students

Case Study: Algerian EFL Secondary School Students
Challenges and Opportunities

Nadia Bourouba

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Art in Teaching Degree at Graduate Institute for International Training, World Learning, Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

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To the memory of the Senator J. William Fulbright, the initiator of the marvelous idea of the Fulbright program. May the program continue to prosper and expand for a better world of peace, understanding and respect.

To my dearest parents, Fatiha & Mohamed,
To all my family,
Thank you for your support and encouragement

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ABSTRACT

The Algerian educational system has put great emphasis on the importance of teaching English and in particular on writing skill so as to prepare competent learners able to interact accurately and fluently with the external world and to cope with the new realities of globalization. However, while 3AS EFL students are expected to have the basic writing skills, they find themselves struggling, unable to produce and develop a piece of writing that meets the writing conventions. Those students confront the same challenge once enrolled in Interpreting and Translation concentration or English as a Foreign Language studies at the faculty of Letters, Human and Social Studies. While this is true, EFL instructors also find it the most challenging skill to teach. The problem, I believe, is due to the fact that the teaching and learning context is not adequate either to teach or to learn the writing skill effectively and appropriately. Many factors (e.g., excessive chronic work demand) hinder the instructors to teach writing adequately, forcing them to follow a " drill and kill" curriculum. Learners without enough support and guidance, become frustrated, unmotivated and unwilling to produce any piece of writing.

The thesis addresses the issue of how instructors can support their students using "scaffolding" strategy. It aims at raising teachers' awareness about the necessity of using "scaffolding", as a powerful and effective strategy, to teach writing so as to help students not only overcome the difficulties they face when writing but also regain their self-confidence as "anyone can write".

ERIC DESCRIPTORS

Writing Skill	Cognitive Processes	Scaffolding
Writing Difficulties	Cooperative Learning	Modeling
Writing Across the Curriculum	Group Dynamics	Competence-Based-
Basic Writing	English Instruction	Education
Cognitive Apprenticeship	Second Language Acquisition	
Collaborative Writing	Teaching Approaches	
Peer Teaching	Constructivism	

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

ELLs: English Language Learners

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

3AS: Troisième Année Secondaire, Third Year Secondary School Students equivalent

to K12 in US

CL: Cooperative Learning

ZDP: Zone of Proximal Development

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

BAC: baccalaureate. It is an educational qualification to enter university

INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem

Writing plays a crucial role in social, cultural, professional and academic contexts. Writing makes us better storytellers, better thinkers, and better persuaders. However, EFL/ ESL students find it the most daunting and elusive task and thus, the least lovable skill. Algerian students who study English as a second foreign language (EFL) are not an exception. During my seventeen years experience of teaching EFL classes in secondary schools in Algeria, I have come to conclude that writing is the most difficult and challenging skill not only for learners but for teachers as well. Whenever students are given a writing assignment, they do it, in one way or another, just because it is a mandatory task. For low-level students, they either copy from their classmates or simply ignore completely the assignment. During exams, students do attempt answering most of the questions including reading comprehension questions, grammar and phonology tasks but give the writing task the least time and importance. On the other hand, because of the challenging teaching context, workload and time pressure to list but a few, writing has the least consideration and attention in teachers' agenda.

2. The Writing Skill in the Algerian Curriculum

Writing as a skill has come to play the eminent role in foreign language teaching in the Algerian official curriculum. This is well stated when describing the exit profile of third year secondary students (3AS).

> Dans une situation de communication, et sur la base d'un support oral ou écrit, l'élève doit produire un message écrit d'une vingtaine de lignes, dans un type de discours écrit choisi (descriptif, narratif, argumentatif, expositif, injonctif), correctement et lisiblement.
>
> (Commission Nationale des Programmes, 2006, p. 5)

This means that upon completion of the school year, based on a written or oral text support and a communication situation, learners should be able to produce a correct and legible

written message of twenty lines in different types of discourse (descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository or injunctive).

Yet, after completion of the school year, most students fail to meet criteria of acceptability relative to the different aspect of writing, as defined by Rymes (1983), including content (relevance, clarity etc), syntax (sentence, structure etc) language use (rules for verbs, agreement, word order, articles, pronouns, conjunctions etc), mechanics (handwriting, spelling, punctuation, capitalization), organization (cohesion and unity among ideas), vocabulary (effective word choice) and purpose (reason for writing, to inform, describe, persuade etc).

Those students confront the same challenge once enrolled in Interpreting and Translation concentration or English as a Foreign Language studies at the faculty of Letters, Human and Social Sciences. While they are expected to have the basic writing skills, they find themselves struggling, unable to produce and develop a piece of writing that meets the writing conventions. Mrs Hamzaoui, professor at the Faculty of Foreign languages, department of English explained the situation:

Many new entrants to University have serious deficiencies in English. In spite of their five years of pre-university English learning, most students have difficulties in both oral and written expression. In class, teachers report students' inability to construct appropriate error-free sentences. Likewise, when writing they seem to be unaware of the basics of writing such as the mechanics of writing (e.g. capitalization, punctuation, indentation), grammar (e.g. subject-verb agreement, use of pronouns) and vocabulary (e.g. frequently using anglicized borrowings from French). Their compositions are merely a list of ideas lacking cohesion and coherence.

(Hamzaoui, 2010, p. 3)

3. Aim of the Study

Departing from what precedes, the thesis aims at raising teachers' awareness about the necessity of approaching the problem using "scaffolding" as a teaching strategy. It addresses how instructors can support their students and provide them with more efficient writing strategies to overcome the pitfall they encounter when writing. The thesis addresses the following questions:

1) *What makes writing a difficult task for EFL, specifically third year secondary school students (3AS)?*
2) *How can we prepare third year students, particularly those who will be enrolled in English studies or related field, for academic writing?*
3) *What strategies should teachers be aware of, and should implement in class to scaffold students' writing process?*

As it has been mentioned before, upon the completion of the school year, third year secondary school students are expected to be able to produce a written message in different types of discourse satisfying the writing conventions. But how can we expect the students to produce an accurate written message in different types of discourse if they are not immersed and exposed to literacy rich environment? How can we expect them to write about the different genres if they have no idea or no explicit instructions about what genre is, its specific purpose, structure, linguistic features etc? If the problem of writing is not merely at the paragraph level but at the sentential level as well, how can these students, those with interest in English studies or related field, be ready for academic writing? Too much expectation (output) has been described in the exit profile of 3 AS students while too little input has the students been exposed to. If the students are not provided with optimal input and enough support, their writing deficiencies shouldn't be surprising. If the activities are beyond their literacy level (affective filter), should we expect them to be interested and motivated?

I believe that we, EFL teachers, have been trapped by the fact that we have been assigning our students activities beyond their abilities without providing them with enough

guidance, assistance and enough time to develop and improve their writing skill. Then, arbitrarily, we assign them unfair grades.

Through this paper, I aim at raising teachers' awareness about the necessity of using scaffolding as an effective strategy to teach writing so as to help students not only overcome the difficulties they face when writing but also regain their self- confidence as "anyone can write". The paper provides a number of scaffolding teaching strategies supported by rigorous research and personal experience as an EFL teacher, found to be the most consistent, effective and helpful that can be implemented in the classrooms. Such objectives can be attained provided that teachers reflect on, and re-consider their practices, making accommodation, adjustment and providing enough and appropriate strategies to facilitate writing learning. I hope that besides providing research supported information about effective writing strategies that scaffold struggling secondary students writers mainly 3AS, this paper will stimulate discussion and raise awareness about the necessity of taking action to improve writing.

4. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into eleven chapters. The first chapter, Introduction, briefly, put forward the background, the problem and the objective of this paper. The next five chapters are devoted to the literature survey. The second chapter discusses the status of English in Algerian educational system and in particular in secondary school, third year students. It presents the exit profile (targeted learning objectives) that English language learners are expected to have once completed their secondary school. Chapter three would explore the different teaching approaches with an emphasis on Competency-based Approach (CBA) as the state-of-the art in Algerian educational system. It would also discuss the writing teaching context under CBA. The teaching and learning context of the writing skill is analyzed and examined in depth in chapter four. This analysis will help in detecting the factors that are impeding both instructors in teaching and students in learning writing effectively. After identifying the main factors that hinder EFL students to interact accurately and fluently in writing and achieve the expected exit profile, solutions and remedies are sought. Chapter five informs and provides the instructors with the different orientations to teaching writing. It aims at helping them finding out what each orientation

entails, taking the most appropriate classroom practice for their teaching contexts. Drawing upon the sociocultural theory and its principles to inform practice, chapter six suggests the use of scaffolding strategy documented to be a very effective and teaching tool conducive to successful learning. The chapter explores four "scaffolds" namely bridging, modeling, cooperative activities, the use of writing frames and graphic organizers. After this literature review, instructors are taken to classroom to explore the application of the SCT principles, and see how a constructivist class looks like. Many different facilitative tools have been documented to be very effective in scaffolding and enhancing students writing. While chapter seven presents some cooperative learning activities used as "scaffolds" to engage and enhance students' writing, chapter eight introduces the instructors to some effective strategies used to activate and/or build students' linguistic, content, formal and cultural schemata to have the necessary scaffolding upon which they can place new concepts, ideas and facts. Before asking students to write in a particular genre or text type, they should be provided with examples or models of that particular genre to develop awareness that every genre has particular characteristics. Chapter nine will provide instructors with some modeling strategies such as Writing Apprenticeship Approach that they can integrate in their writing lesson, making the tacit and invisible processes in carrying out a writing task explicit and observable to their students. As most of struggling writers lack the necessary skills for processing and organizing their ideas, chapter ten will be the right destination to help students develop the processing and organizational skills. This chapter provides the instructors with writing frames and graphic organizers as mediational tools that serve at helping students structure their ideas and direct their own writing towards a particular purpose. Then, conclusion, and recommendations are put forth in chapter eleven.

CHPATER TWO
TEACHING ENGLISH IN ALGERIA

Introduction

The English language has been spread at an incredible speed all over the world. Whatever the reasons, political, economical, educational and so forth that help in its expansion, English remains the most used tool of communication. It can be seen whenever we travel, at the airport and train stations, on the road signs and advertisements, in hotels and restaurant menus and much more. Undoubtedly, the technological boom in telecommunication, namely the Internet and media, are to a large extent, the driving forces of this process. Being an international language used in all fields, it is not astonishing that learning English becomes a "must", "taught as a foreign language-in over 100 countries such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt and Brazil- and in most of these countries it is emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in school"(David Cristal, 2003 p. 5).

2.1. The Status of English Language in Algerian Educational System

Algeria enjoys a linguistic diversity that makes it a unique. Its official language is classical Arabic as specified in its constitution since 1963. Berber, the indigenous languages and dialects of North Africa west of the Nile River, has been acknowledged as a national language since 2002. Even though Berber is spoken in many parts of Algeria (for example, Kabyle in Kabylia, Chaouia in Aures, Tumzabt in Mzab), Algerian Arabic, with its diverse dialects, remains the most prominent language used in everyday life and information situations. Having been a French colony for almost 130 years until independence in 1962, it is not surprising to see the great impact of the French language usage in everyday life. French is still widely used in government, media, culture and even education with no official status though. However, despite the fact that French has had a strong foothold in Algeria, it has been retreating and loosing its status as the principal foreign language. The story started in 1993 during which English was introduced in the second year of the primary level. Learners, under the guidance of their parents, could choose to learn either French or English. The experience, however, was not successful as

expected, as Miliani stated, because more than 6 million pupils expressed their interest in learning French rather than learning English (around 85000), (personal communication, February 24, 2012).   Another reason was that teachers were not well prepared to teach young learners. Some explain that the decision of introducing English in the primary school was based on the belief that language acquisition occurs during a critical period, which ends at about the age of puberty (the critical period hypothesis). For effective learning, therefore, learners have to acquire English at an early age. Others assume that its inclusion was conceived as " the magic solution to all possible ills- including economic, technological and educational ones" (Miliani 2000, p. 13). Nevertheless, the introduction of English in the primary school was more of a political manoeuvre rather than for educational purposes; the goal was simply to eradicate the French language influence, the property of the old enemy, either inside or outside school (Miliani). In fact, these decision makers are unaware of the sociolinguistic reality of the country. They ignore the fact that French is a part of the Algerian cultural identity and real life situations in which learners have more exposure to French than any other foreign language, thus its learning contexts are "by far more conducive to successful learning"(Miliani, p. 26). Within this context of conflicts, mono-lingualism versus pluralism, French adoption versus French rejection, English, temporarily, had found an appropriate terrain to reign, pushing French aside as the dominant foreign language. While this may be true, that language planning has been under the influence of politicians for many decades, no one can ignore the fact that English has imposed itself in almost all the corners of the world without any "study or strategic management"(Graddol, 1997, p. 2). The hybridity and permeability as defining features of English are amongst other factors that help in its rapid spread (Graddol). In this globalized world where interaction is an apparent feature, English becomes the lingua franca, the "instrument" of communication and interaction used in international organizations, conferences, economy, Internet and so forth. As a logical consequence, Algeria, like many countries, has found herself shifting the attention to the learning and teaching of English as a necessity to cope with the new realities, refusing to be left behind.

To cope with the new era and new realities, Algeria has put great emphasis on the importance of teaching English. Despite the fact that French is still taught as a *first foreign language* with a lion's share in terms of teaching time allotment as it is introduced in

schools at an early age, *ironically,* students, to my knowledge, are generally more successful in English than French. Many French teachers reported having their students using English words in speaking or writing or spelling French words using English pronunciation. English is taught as a second foreign language after French. It is introduced in the middle schools where students are supposed to learn it for four years, then in the secondary schools for three years. Besides, it is taught at universities in almost all faculties such as economics, psychology, sociology, and as ESP (English for Specific Purpose). In the absence of ESP curriculum and teaching experts in the domain, teaching English at universities is mostly covered by experienced ESL secondary school teachers who themselves design the curriculum, ideally, based on the students' needs and objectives.

2. 2. The Main Objectives of Teaching English in the Secondary Schools

The teaching of English as EFL is inspired by the national policy that believes that English is a necessity that shouldn't be disregarded. The purpose of teaching English has been stated clearly in the curriculum:

> Le but de l'enseignement de l'anglais est d'aider notre société à **s'intégrer** harmonieusement dans la **modernité** en participant pleinement et entièrement à la communauté linguistique qui utilise cette langue pour tous types d'**interaction.** Cette participation, basée sur le **partage** et l'**échange** d'idées et d'expériences scientifiques, culturelles et civilisationnelles, permettra une meilleure connaissance de soi et de l'autre. L'on dépassera ainsi une conception étroite et utilitariste de l'apprentissage de l'anglais pour aller vers une approche plus offensive où l'on ne sera plus consommateur mais acteur et agent de changement. Ainsi chacun aura la possibilité d'accéder à la science, la technologie et la culture universelle tout en évitant l'écueil de l'acculturation.

(Commission Nationale des Programmes, 2006, p. 3, highlighting in original)

So the main aim of teaching English is to help the Algerian society interact as an active agent, harmoniously and with open-mindedness, with the external world, exchanging ideas, experiences, and cultures. This latter goal paves the way not only to the understanding of others but of the self as well. Having the mastery of languages will certainly help access

science, technology and universal culture without falling in the pitfall of acculturation. Besides acquiring the linguistic and communicative skills, developing critical, analytical thinking and preparing a tolerant and open-minded citizen there remain other highlighted objectives behind teaching English (English Curriculum, p. 3).

Learning English becomes a very necessary linguistic tool that helps students integrate harmoniously and effectively in the process of globalization taking benefits of any innovation made in the field of academic/scientific research. (President Bouteflika's speech, 2001)

As has been mentioned before, students enter secondary school after having covered four years of learning English in the middle school. It is worth noting that apart from classrooms, these students have no opportunity to encounter English because vernaculars (regional dialects of Arabic and Berber) and French are the dominant ones in every day life situations.

According to the Ministry of education, English Curriculum National Commission, the main objectives for teaching English are as follows:

Linguistic and communicative objective: TEFL (teaching English as a Foreign Language) aims at enabling learners to communicate accurately (mastery of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, oral and written convention) and fluently in English. This will pave the way to further graduate studies whose main instruction is in English.

Methodological and technological objectives: TEFL aims at promoting learners' strategies for learning and self-assessment to enable them to deepen and broaden their knowledge. Additionally, an aim is encouraging reflection at all stages of learning and training the learners to do research in English using ICT (information and communication technologies) such as the Internet.

Socio-Cultural and Professional objectives: TEFL aims at stimulating the learners' curiosity by exposing them to English speaking countries' cultures (American, British, Australian, etc.). Besides, bridging the gap between school life and real life by relating school acquisitions to varied and pertinent contexts of use inside as well as outside school, to prepare the learners for professional life.

2. 2. 1 Entry Profile in 3 AS

Upon their entry to 3AS, learners have already been exposed to English for six years. Therefore, they are expected to have the ability to produce either an oral or written message of at least fifteen lines, whose topic is related to the text already read or heard, and in accordance with the communication situation presented in the instruction.

2.3.2. Exit profile

Upon completion of the school year, the learners should be able to produce a written message of twenty lines in different types of discourse (descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository, injunctive). But as we have seen earlier in chapter one, students completed their school year without being able to meet these " high expectations." They enter university and enroll in English studies or other related field with serious deficiencies in writing. So, the question is what hinders these expectations to be realized? Before addressing this question, let's explore, first, Competency-Based Approach as the State-of-the Art approach in the Algerian educational system and examine how writing is conceived and taught under this approach. Chapter three provides us with some data that will help, to some extent, in analyzing the problem and identifying the factors affecting students to write effectively.

CHAPTER THREE

COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH

AS THE STATE-OF-THE ART IN THE ALGERIAN SCHOOL

Introduction

  Before we embark on an overview of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA), as an extension of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach (CLTA), I found it necessary to have a glance at the major language teaching approaches widely used before the 1960s. After defining CLTA, identifying its principles and practices, we will examine the main features and practices underlying CBA. We should see, then, how the writing skill is taught under CBA, before we close the chapter with a conclusion

3.1 Language Teaching Approaches Brief Review:

  From the Traditional to the Contemporary ones

  Before the 1960's, traditional approaches to language teaching had their heyday in educational institutions. They are based on the belief that learners' language proficiency depends solely on their knowledge of *the structure of language.* This could be achieved through methodologies namely Audio-lingualism and Structural Situational Approach. Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) places heavy emphasis on repetitive practice and drilling. Techniques that were used promote mimicry and memorization with pattern drills so as to reinforce correct habits. By the middle of the twentieth century, Noam Chomsky questioned previous assumptions about language learning claiming that children are born with the innate language-learning abilities that take the form of a language acquisition device (LAD), which proceeds by hypothesis and testing. In other words, language is creative and rule-governed, requiring cognitive processing and an active mental effort to learn it rather than a process of habit formation. This gave rise, in the 1960s, to Cognitive Code Learning that put stress on the guided discovery of rules. Under this approach, learners are encouraged to work out grammar rules deductively rather than inductively. During the 1970's, "linguistics began to look at language, not as interlocking set of grammatical, lexical and phonological rules but as a tool of expressing meaning"(Nunan,

2003, p. 6). What would be the use of grammar rules without the rules of use (The use of language in different communicative context) (Hymes, 1972, p. 278)? The centrality of grammar in language teaching and learning was strongly challenged since the functional communicative potential of language had been insufficiently addressed and inadequately represented. It was argued that language proficiency is not a mere mastery of structures as one can achieve grammatical competence, yet not being able to use the language for meaningful communication (Richards, 2006). What was missed was *communicative competence*, a term coined by Hymes, which concerns the socio-cultural components of the language. In other words, how to use the language appropriately for different communicative purposes "such as making requests, giving advice, making suggestions, describing wishes and needs, and so on"(Richards, p. 9). This has been a driving force in the emergence of a new approach to language teaching. The result was the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach. Thereafter, teachers and syllabi designers started to review and reconsider their methodologies and teaching materials that reflect the principles of CLT.

3.2 Communicative Language Teaching: Conception and Practices

Communicative language teaching is based on the theory that regards communication as the primary function of language. Hence its primary goal is to help learners develop communicative competence by providing authentic sources, meaningful and communicative- oriented tasks as the basis for learning. Teachers need to specify the communicative goals of the lesson and describe what the learners should be able to do at the end of the lesson. For instance, a typical communicative goal can be as follow:

> *By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to use the socially appropriate greeting expressions in a formal setting in the US, in role-play situations.*

Drawing upon different readings about CLT, I have tried to summarize the main conception and practices that underlie CLT as shown in Table 3. 1.

3. 2. 1 Current Direction in the CLT

Recent researchers in social psychology, humanistic education and cognitive theory

have come up with new findings and opened new insights in the understanding of the process of second language learning. In recent years, learning as an active social process is increasingly emphasized where learners with different needs and backgrounds are actively involved in the learning process in an interactive environment. Within diverse assumptions and educational paradigms, CLT is constantly evolving into diverse practices with no single model as accepted universally. Rather, in reality, it is applied in different ways depending on the teaching context, the learners' age, their interests and abilities, their levels and goals (Richards, p. 22). Despite these diverse practices, they all emerge from the same resource (CLT) and in accordance with a set of principles.

3. 2. 2 The Main Principles Underlying Current CLT

The following list, adapted mainly from (Richard, 2006), serves as a summary for the main principles and shifts that underlie the current CLT:

- Second language learning is promoted provided that learners are engaged in an interactive environment and meaningful communication

- Second language learning is promoted provided that the learners are supported with enough opportunities to negotiate meaning and notice how language is used.

- Communication is a holistic process requiring the use of several language skills and modalities. It includes the interrelationship of the four skills (listening-speaking-reading and writing) since they generally occur so in real life.

- Teacher is no longer the spoon-feeder, an all-knowing font of knowledge. Rather, knowledge is socially constructed. The teacher's role is that of a facilitator, needs analyst and guidance provider, creating an atmosphere that is conducive to language learning.

- Learners' errors are expected as a normal part of learning, it is an indication that the learners are building up their communicative competence. However, achieving fluency as well as accuracy remains the ultimate goal of learning.

- Learners are individuals with different needs, interests, levels and abilities. These learners' differences are to be catered to and recognized.

- The classroom is a community where students learn cooperatively and collaboratively to pursue goals and objectives

- Learning is a life long process and not just concerned with the immediate classroom task and exams (Brown, p. 46).

- Successful learning involves whatever sparks learners to reach their fullest potential

Conception and practices		
Subject matter	**Language**	**Culture**
Situations that students are likely to encounter in real life Use of supra-sentential or discourse level of language	Language is social behavior system for the expression of meaning Its primary function is to allow interaction and communication	The cultural component is an important aspect of the language to interact appropriately in different situations and relationships Knowing the rules and conventions of the speech community to avoid communication breakdowns
Learner	**Learning**	**Activity types**
"More responsible managers of their own learning" (Larsen-freeman, 1986). Negotiator, interactor either in flesh, through pair or group work or in their writing	Promoted through the accomplishment of meaningful tasks	Information-gap, such as jigsaw activities Information sharing Negotiation of meaning and interaction
Teacher	**Teaching**	**Educational outcomes**
Developer of learning materials on the basis of the particular needs of the learners Facilitator of the communication process Counselor, process manager	Authentic materials (E.g. advertisement, newspaper, radio/TV broadcasting) Meaningful activities that involve real communication	Effective communication Communicative competence (the ability to use the system effectively and appropriately) Fluency as well as accuracy

Table 3.1:The main concepts and practices underlying the CLT

3. 3 Competency-Based Approach: Conception and Practices

Competency-based language teaching (CBLT) –is an extension of the CLT movement. It draws on a conception that views learning as both cognitive and socio-constructive. Put it simply:

- Knowledge is not simply acquired but is constructed in the mind of a learner. The learners actively construct his/her understanding building upon his/her prior knowledge (schema).
- Knowledge is socially constructed. Learning is a social process and not a private activity. It depends upon interaction with others.

Additionally, CBLT is based on the humanistic, learner-centered approach (Auerback, 1986, p. 413) that recognizes the importance of the affective needs in learning.

CBLT subscribes to the *functional* and *interactional* view of language.

- Language is a tool for communicating *functional* meaning. Functional approach focuses strongly on "the pragmatic purpose to which we put language"(Brown, 2007, p. 33). In other words, what people want to *do* through language. For instance, in the 3 AS Algerian textbook, the following functions are covered in Unit 6, entitled "Feelings and Emotions":

  1-Expressing likes and dislikes   3- Asking for and giving advice

  2-Expressing preferences   4-Narrating

- Language is *interactional*. It aims at maintaining social relations between people. Therefore, second language learners are not only required to learn about the usage of the language (grammar, vocabulary) but also about the use (how to use the language in different communicative context) so as to prevent any communicative breakdown. The more learners interact, the more they enhance their communicative abilities (Brown, p. 54).

A competency-based curriculum has been defined as "a performance-based outline of language tasks that lead to a demonstrated mastery of the language associated with specific skills that are necessary for individuals to function proficiently in the society in which they live" (Grognet & Crandall, as cited in Auerback, 1986, p. 413). It aims at providing the learners with the necessary *skills* or *performances* so that they can function proficiently in

the society. These skills are determined by needs analysis. If the student can fill in blanks on a language art but is unable to write an application letter, and if he/she excels in multiplication with decimals and percent, but incapable of figuring out sales tax, it implies that he/she is wrongly instructed (Slavin, 2003, p. 241) and his/her needs are not identified and determined. CBLT is, therefore, the right model to rectify the disparity generated and to deliver "educational services that allow[s] for responsible and accountable teaching" (Findley and Nathan, 1980, p. 222). This model equips individuals with the skills deemed necessary for functional participation in the society. Auerback has identified 8 features that underlie CBLT, summarized as follows:

1-A focus on successful functioning in society: Preparing autonomous individuals who are able to cope with the demands of the world.

2- A focus on life skills: Teaching the students only the language forms/skills required for particular situations that they encounter in real life. These skills are determined by needs analysis

3- Task- or performance-centered orientation: Emphasizing what the students can do (outcomes) as a result of instruction rather than on how they process their learning.

4- Modularized instruction: Dividing objectives into sub-objectives so that both teachers and students can get a clear sense of progress.

5- Outcomes are explicit and predetermined: Students are informed about what behaviors they are expected to demonstrate at the end of the course

6-Continuous and ongoing assessment: Learning activity is repeated/reinforced until competence is achieved. Program evaluation is based on test results and, as such, is considered objectively quantifiable.

7. *Demonstrated mastery of performance objectives*: Rather than the traditional paper-and-pencil tests, assessments are based on the ability to demonstrate pre-specified behaviors.

8- Individualized, student-centered instruction: Each student should be individualized and self- paced. Objectives are defined in terms of individual needs; prior learning and achievement are taken into account in developing curricula.

So, CBA is a functional, task- centered, and outcome-based instruction. Its main concern is what the learners are expected *to do* with language in life situations rather than what they

are expected to learn *about* language. It seeks to develop certain skills that learners need to function efficiently in society. These skills are predetermined by needs analysis.

3. 3. 1 Writing Skill under CBA

Under CBA, writing is " functionally oriented, context specified"(Auerbach, 1999, p. 1). It is much concerned with the idea that "certain language forms perform certain communicative *functions* and that students can be taught the functions most relevant to their needs"(Hyland, 2003, p. 6). For instance, the students learn how to write an application letter using appropriate organization patterns to request a job. Or they learn how to write a holiday advert for a local travel agency using relevant language form to persuade the customers to buy the service. The focus is, therefore, on text functions. For that reason, this orientation is called "current traditional rhetoric" or "functional approach"(Hyland). The main aim remains to help the learners develop abilities in writing different kind of paragraphs using appropriate organizational patterns (e.g., narration, description, instruction) to meet the demands of society.

3. 3. 2 CBA as the State-of-the Art in Algerian Educational System

To satisfy the high demand for skills-based curricula that prepare students for life tasks and for the successful functioning in society and in the era of globalization, Algeria has actively engaged in implementing this approach in its educational system. The process of educational reform initiated in 2002. JFIT (Japanese Funds-In-Trust) funded the process of the reform, and IBE (International Bureau of Education) jointly with IEEP (International Institute for Educational Planning) contributed with its technical advice and training to prepare planners, curriculum designers, evaluators and teacher trainers for this reform (UNESCO, IBE, report). During the school year 2003-2004, Algeria officially espoused CBA as the state-of-art orientation. Teachers, important partners in the educational system, could hardly understand its principles and practices and thus, apply it as it should be as they were not well informed and prepared in advance for this reform. Seminars, workshops, experts in the field were urgently needed. The Ministry of Education invested in a variety of resources to meet those needs, in particular giving sufficient training for teachers. The

Partnership Schools Program funded through the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry of National Education was created in 2005 to ensure that teachers and supervisors are trained to the highest standards of international best practices in the delivery of a competency based language syllabus. Since then, a series of trainings, organized by MEPI/ PSP, have been delivered by World Learning (WL)/School for International Training (SIT) to explore how the competency-based principles expressed within the curriculum might be made more readily available to a variety of educational stakeholders: Ministry officials, inspectors, teachers, students and parents.

3. 3. 3 CBA Practices in 3AS Classroom

As the competency-based approach builds on the premise that views language as functional and interactional, therefore, its ultimate objective is to develop communicative competence in English that enables learners make connections with the world and communicate something about one's self, community and country to others. According to the Guiding Principles for Teaching English in Algeria (elaborated by WL/SIT experts and a group of English Inspectors), this competence involves interacting with others using receptive/ interpretive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (speaking and writing), supported by the ability to use vocabulary and grammar appropriately and employ a range of language strategies that help convey and clarify meaning. The Competency- based approach seeks to establish three competences in learners:

1. To interact orally in English
2. To interpret authentic, oral or written, documents
3. To produce, oral or written, meaningful messages

The Competency-Based Approach is conceived as an extension of the communicative approach, thus its learner-centered orientation under which the teacher is a facilitator, a group work monitor whose job is to create an environment that is conducive to learning. In so doing, he/she is required to design his/her lesson taking the learners' needs, prior knowledge, interests and their individuality into consideration and plans activities that

allow the learners to practice and develop real-life communication skills for reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Learners, information negotiators and collaborators, are expected to play an active role in the learning process, and develop strategies that enable them to solve problems. CBA creates an atmosphere where the learners are responsible for their learning and it initiates them into self-assessment.

The textbook for the 3 AS is a thematically/ functionally based format. It includes six units, with six themes: Ancient Civilizations, Ethics in Business, Education in the World, Advertising, Consumers and Safety, Astronomy and the Solar System and Feelings and Emotions. Each unit involves two parts. The first part, divided into two sequences, "Listen and consider" and "Read and consider", deals with language outcomes. It aims at studying and analyzing the two texts at the linguistic level (grammatical structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling). Think, pair, share will be an activity that gives the students the opportunity to re-invest, either in speaking or writing, the thematic and linguistic tools acquired by foregrounding a particular function (e.g., advising, comparing, informing). After internalizing the thematic and linguistic tool in the first part, the learners move to the second part that compromises two sequences: listening and speaking and reading and writing. In this part, the students are expected to develop compositional skills and communication strategies. Table 3.2 describes language outcomes and skills and strategies outcomes that students are expected to demonstrate at the end of the unit. This part is concerned with the structural and discursive aspects of the texts. Its aim is to elaborate and expand on the functions, language and social skills acquired earlier so that the students flesh out in, writing, their communicative abilities. All that has been learnt so far manifests itself in a final task called *a project*. In fact, the students, in groups, are assigned this task right at the beginning of the unit making it clear what they are expected to do.

Skills and strategies Outcomes	**Language outcomes**
• Listening for gist	• Using the present cont passive in description
• Listening for details	• Expressing cause & result; because, so+adjective+that
• Responding to an opinion	• Expressing obligation and necessity
• Defending opinions	• Forming nouns by adding suffix-ty to adjectives
• Writing an argumentative speech	• Forming opposites by adding prefixes dis-il-, etc.
	• Writing an opinion article
	Source: New Prospects "The Algerian course book for 3 AS"

Table 3.2: Language Outcomes (sequence one) Skills and Strategies (sequence three)

The project, as shown in figure 3.3, that runs in parallel with the sequences is organized around a question, or a problem related to the topic of the unit. Working collaboratively over an extended period of time, four weeks or more, and under the guidance of the teacher, the students design a process and use investigative skills to reach a solution. They usually refer to their community (e.g., parent, experts in the field) to get information. The teacher evaluates their work regularly to give them a chance to reflect on what they are doing.

The project is constructivist as the learners take almost full responsibility for their learning. And it is a real world oriented task because they practice some kinds of behaviors in the class that might be encountered in real world. For instance, through the project the students learn to work as a team and contribute to a group effort and to listen to others and make their own ideas clear when speaking. These skills are often known as "21st Century Skills." The project is considered the most visible and measurable task, as it is in this phase that the teachers along with the students can observe and measure the objectives and pre-specified performances. Because of time constraint, and mainly that

the educational system is more exam oriented, the project, unfortunately, has been skipped

recently. Under the pressure to cover the mandatory units, including the grammatical functions, vocabulary, the thematic tools that the students will encounter in their exams and are expected to master, this interactive, communicative task is left to be done in D-day. The unit is closed with two kinds of assessment tools. A learning log for self-assessment, listing language items studied so far, is provided to students to indicate the level of performance they have attained (e.g., very well, fairly well, not well). The second tool is a selected text related to the unit theme and a series of tasks generally devised around skills and strategies (e.g., skimming, scanning, inferring, responding to a text). These tools help the teacher assess her/his teaching and also decide what components of the unit that need revision.

Again, this evaluation, to my knowledge, is generally skipped and if done, there would be little revision. As there is little time for further assistance, there is little reviewing, because the teacher is required to move on to the next unit for the sake of covering the required units.

Project Outcome	
A survey about the impact of advertising	o Your report should include the following sections:
Your survey should comprise the following:	
o A questionnaire	1. An introduction (including background, purpose of the survey, and expected findings),
o A result form	
o Diagrams	2. A short description of the questionnaire and the targeted audience
o A report	
Follow these guidelines in conducting your	3. A discussion of the findings with illustrative tables, charts, etc.
Survey.	
Preparing the questionnaire	4. A conclusion giving a summary of the survey and a statement of implications and recommendations
Decide what types of advertisement and audience you would like to in investigate before you design your questionnaire. For example, your questionnaire could focus on the impact of TV commercials. You may address it to various people outside the classroom or to your fellow students in the lycee.	**Alternative projects**
	1-Producing a radio or a TV commercial 2-Making a leaflet for selling a product 3-Designing newspaper classified for rents, for employment, etc.
o Writing the report	
In writing the report, you should make the best use of elements of grammar, vocabulary, functions and skills you have learnt in this unit.	Web sites
	www.shoppingpage.us/ www.ofcom.org.uk
	www.advertopedia.com/ www.speedtv.com/speed/advertising
	Source: New Prospects p. 132, 3AS course book

Table 3.3: Project outcomes

Summary

So far in this chapter, we have taken a brief look at the traditional teaching approach, mainly ALM that advocates the use of mimicry drills and pattern practice for the sake of language acquisition. It was very popular and widely used for many years and it is still now. However, it was faced with major criticisms as classroom practitioners and material developers noticed that the continuous learning by rote was not creating communicatively proficient learners (Brown, 2007, p24). The Chomskyan revolution with the theory of TGG (transformational generative grammar) and cognitive psychology turned linguists and language teachers towards the mental process (rather than a process of habit formation) emphasizing comprehension, thinking and the uniqueness of language learning to the human species (Nunan, 2003, p. 6). This gave birth to Cognitive Code Learning that promotes a deductive approach to language learning. Yet, "the overt cognitive attention to the rules"(Brown, p. 24), was not to last forever. The late 1970s and early 1980s, the era of pioneering research in second language acquisition, saw the emergence of CLT (communicative language teaching) that views language as a tool for expressing meaning. Its goal is to help learners develop communicative competence by providing authentic sources and meaningful and communicative- oriented tasks as the basis for learning. Within diverse assumptions and educational paradigms, CLA is constantly evolving into diverse practices with no single model as accepted universally. Competency-based approach, being one type within CLT framework, has taken different paths to develop communicative competence. This approach, embraced by many countries including Algeria, uses the outcomes as the starting point in designing the curricula. For that reason, it was criticized for taking control of learning out of students' hands (Auerbach, P. 422), while it is supposed to draw on student-centered learning, one of the principles of CLT. Corder pointed out that through classroom interaction between students and instructors can we identify what and how learners need to learn (as cited in Auerbach). In fact, my aim in this chapter is not to deny or embrace any of the approaches, either mentioned or not mentioned in this brief sketch of methodology, as no model will be self-sufficing to satisfy "the diversity of language learners in multiple worldwide contexts"(Brown, p. 41). My main aim here is to draw teachers' attention to the necessity to get informed about the different teaching orientations and to keep up with the field of second language acquisition. Adding

to that, teachers are requested to reflect on their teaching and see what worked, what didn't and why. In so doing, the teachers will have a well-thought-out approach to language teaching.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STATUE QUO OF WRITING IN 3 AS EFL CLASSROOMS

Introduction

So far we have seen how EFL students, in particular 3rd year secondary school students in Algeria, find writing a laborious, most daunting and almost unattainable task and thus, the least agreeable skill in EFL learning. Now, let's see, Why is writing difficult? How is writing taught in Algeria? What factors that hinder 3 AS EFL students from achieving writing proficiency? Why do the majority of them fail to meet the expectations underlying by the Ministry of Education (developing a competency in writing skill)?

4.1 Writing as a Complex Skill and its Components

Writing is intellectually challenging. " It is neither an easy nor a spontaneous activity. It usually requires some conscious and mental effort." (Byrne, 1979, p. 1). To communicate their thoughts accurately and effectively, writers have to think about how to select the appropriate words, how to combine and arrange their ideas in a coherent way and make them as transparent as possible so that readers will not face difficulties in decoding their messages.

Byrne relates the problem of writing to three factors. The first factor is purely psychological. Because of the absence of feedback interaction between the writer and the reader, writers must ensure that their massages can be understood and interpreted without any further help from them. The second factor is characterized by linguistic problems. If oral communication is maintained through feedback and interaction (facial expression, murmur, a grunt, nod, prosodic features such as pitch, loudness, pauses etc.), writing calls upon necessary devices such as graphological devices (punctuation, highlighting for emphasis etc.), logical cohesion (words and phrases that indicate meaning and logical relation between ideas) and so forth that substitute for the absence of the features used in speech. These devices are used so as to produce a text that "can be interpreted on its own"(Byrne, p. 5). The third factor has to do with a cognitive problem in that writing has to be taught through a process of instruction. The students need to learn the written form of the language, for instance, to learn how ideas should be organized and sequenced using

appropriate logical devices, how the words should be spelled and carefully selected for effective communication. Moreover, the writer may also face another problem in terms of content: what shall I say and what language to consider? And the task becomes harder if she/he is requested to write about something she/he is not familiar with.

From what has been discussed, it follows that producing a piece of writing is not an easy task. On the contrary, it is a laborious skill that calls upon many elements. As shown in the diagram below, Raimes (1983) draws attention to the of including elements when producing a piece of writing namely:

- Content
- The writer process
- Audience Purpose
- Purpose
- Word choice
- Organization (cohesion & coherence)
- Mechanic
- Grammar
- Syntax

Before putting pen to paper, writers also need to consider two questions:

- Who am I writing this for? (Audience)

- Why am I writing this? (Purpose)

These two components (audience & purpose) affect writing significantly. The writers need to think about their eventual readers: a friend, an institution, a teacher, a local newspaper, an examiner, etc. This helps define " writing voice", either formal, relaxed, serious, or tentative. Writers should be aware of their readers, anticipate their needs and interests, how they process the text, how they actually read. They need to make their writing as accessible and unambiguous as possible.

The other question has to do with the function. Is the writing going to be a report, a letter of application, a letter of complaint, a policy statement etc? The purpose of the writing certainly determines how the information should be organized and sequenced.

Producing a Piece of Writing

SYNTAX
Sentence structure
sentence boundaries
stylistic choices, etc,

CONTENT
relevance, clarity,
originality, logic, etc

GRAMMAR
rules of verbs,
agreement, articles,
Pronouns, etc.

THE WRITER'SPROCESS
getting ideas,
getting started
writing drafts, revising

Clear, fluent,

And effective

Communication of ideas

MECHANICS
handwriting,
spelling,
punctuation, etc.

AUDIENCE
the reader/s

ORGANIZATION
Paragraphs, topic and support,
cohesion & coherence and unity

WORD CHOICE
Vocabulary, idiom, tone

PURPOSE
The reason for
writing

Diagram 4.1 The Components of Writing   Source: (Raimes, 1983, p. 6)

Equally important to note, writing, as a complex process, requires "a number of operations going on simultaneously"(Hedge, 1988, p. 9). These stages can be summarized as follow:

1- pre-writing 2- drafting 3- revising 4- editing 5- publishing

Prewriting: is the idea-gathering stage and the collection of the information.

Drafting: refers to writing itself and making the first draft.

Revising: refers to the process of improving the draft. Revising has to do with reading over the draft and assessing what has already been written.

Hedges uses " writing and rewriting" to refer to drafting and revising. She differentiates between the two in a way that" drafting process focuses primarily *on what* the writer wants to say, while redrafting progressively focuses *on how* to say it more

effectively" (p. 23). Hedges mentioned that when revising, the writer generally addresses points like these:

- Am I sharing my impression clearly enough with my reader?
- Have I missed out any important points of information?
- Does the vocabulary need to be made strong at any point?
- Are the links between sections clear? Do they guide my reader through the writing?

(Hedges, P. 23)

Editing: it is in this stage that writing makes the finishing touches and checks accuracy to make the text accessible to the reader before it is published.

Hedges demonstrate this process in the following figure.

Being motivated to write→ getting ideas together→ planning and outlining→ making notes→ making a first draft→ revising→ editing and getting ready for publication

Source: Hedges, 1988, p. 21
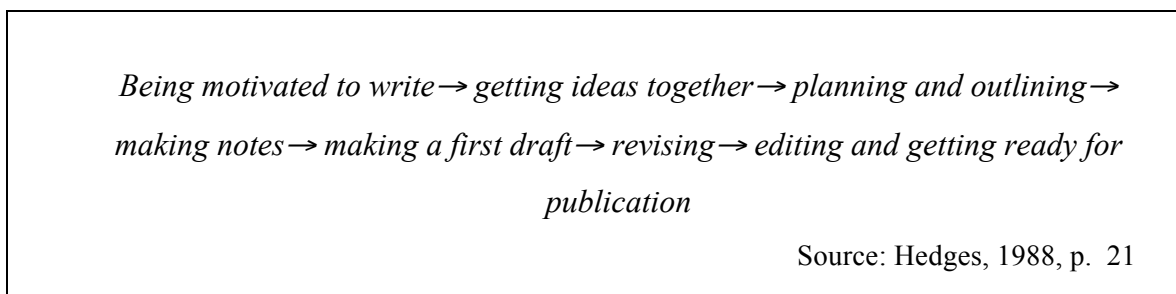
Figure 4.2   The Process of Writing

She adds that writing is more a recursive activity than a linear process. It is " a cyclical process during which writers move backwards and forwards between drafting and revising, with stages of re-planning in between" (p. 21). On the other hand, Heaton (1988) suggests the following skills when producing a piece of writing:

- *Language use skills*: the ability to write correct sentences.
- *Mechanical skills*: the ability to spell, punctuate and capitalize effectively
- *Stylistic skills*: the ability to assemble words and sentences together to create a coherent piece of writing, including word choice, figurative language, sentence length and structure etc.
- *Critical thinking skills*: the ability to think creatively; developing thoughts and excluding all trivial information.

- *Judgment skills*: the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose, with a particular audience in mind.

From what has been said, there is no doubt that writing is a complex and demanding cognitive activity as it includes various skills and abilities. While most L1 writers are already equipped with a large amount of vocabulary and have this intuitive ability to generate correct grammar, "L2 writers often carry the burden of learning to write and learning English at the same time" (Hyland, 2003, p. 34).

4-2 Factors that Hinder 3AS, EFL Students to Achieve Writing Proficiency

As discussed in the previous chapters, 3AS students are expected, upon completion of the school year, to be able to produce a piece of writing of twenty lines in different types of discourse. However, most of the students fail to meet these expectations. So, what possible explanations are there for the failure of 3 AS, EFL students to achieve writing proficiency?

Prior to identifying the main factors responsible for the low achievement of students in writing task, it should be necessary to describe the teaching context under which this skill is taught and how it is generally taught.

As discussed in chapter two, The Algerian educational system has embraced a competency-based approach as the state-of-art since 2002. Since then, policy makers, and funders have actively engaged to implement it in the different schools (secondary, middle and primary schools). CBA, as defined earlier, is a functional, task- centered, and outcome-based instruction. Its main concern is what the learners are expected *to do* with language in life situations rather than what they are expected to learn about language. It seeks at developing certain skills that learners need to function efficiently in society. However, CLT principles are at its heart. Drawing on the cognitive, socio constructivist and humanistic theories, CBA focuses strongly on individualized, student-centered learning that accounts for learners' prior knowledge, needs, styles, abilities and goals. It also relies on interactive learning that provides an atmosphere where students are actively engaged constructing and taking control of their learning through hands-on, cooperative and collaborative work. This leads, undoubtedly, to developing students' communicative

competence that is at the core of the Algerian curriculum. Concerning the current state of affairs regarding writing in Algerian schools, it is worth pointing that this skill is not taught as a course in itself. It is 'taught" as a component of the English (EFL) course for which the students are allotted three to four hours per week. Under CBA, writing is supposed to be " functionally oriented, context specified"(Auerbach, 1999, p. 1). The focus is, therefore, on text functions. For instance, the students learn how to write an application letter using appropriate organization patterns to request a job or how to write a holiday advert for a local travel agency using relevant language form to persuade the customers to buy the service. The main aim of teaching writing is thus to help students develop effective paragraphs using topic sentences, supporting sentences, and transitions supported by the ability to use vocabulary and grammar appropriately and employ a range of language strategies that help convey and clarify meaning. Because the educational system is more exams oriented, it makes writing seem more product-oriented and as an ancillary skill practicing language, reinforcing linguistic knowledge, vocabulary, and syntactic pattern studied within the units. It is worth noting that the students, allotted 3 to 4 hours a week to learn EFL, barely get enough opportunities to be exposed to a literacy rich environment that helps them acquire the language. Needless to say, writing, as a complex task, needs much time and enormous effort to learn its different components (e.g., organization, vocabulary, syntax) and its various skills from identifying the purpose and the audience to brainstorming and generating ideas to drafting, to revising ideas to proofreading. Time is really a very important element in the writing process. However, because of time constraint, the pressure of meeting the expectation of covering the mandatory units, and preparing the 3 AS students for the Baccalaureate exam (a national exam that students are required to pass to access university), the only option generally left for teachers is assigning the writing tasks as homework. And the students, *on their own* and with little assistance, carry out the assignment without a clear idea how to handle the task, just for the benefit of their teachers and to escape their punishments.

On the other hand, with little training about writing skill, instructors, mainly the inexperienced ones, are not well informed and trained to teach writing effectively. This situation is exacerbated by a teaching overload of generally more than eighteen hours

weeks, teaching large classes that most of the time exceed 30 students peer class. Furthermore, they are required to assess learners continuously (competence-based approach principle), gathering, interpreting, and keeping records of their performance over a long period of time. This excessive chronic work demand so often forces the teachers to follow a " drill and kill" curriculum leaving them with no room for extra-curricular activities and the like. Constant and increasing pressure on the teachers will, therefore, hinder their performance.

Stephen Krashen takes a very strong position on the importance of input in second language acquisition (SLA). He asserts that the more comprehensible input is, the more proficient learners will be. And the less understandable input is, the more language acquisition will be delayed and hampered. Similar to Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (1962) (as cited in Ariza & Hancock, 2003), Krashen input hypothesis claims that learners excel and progress along the natural order when they receive input containing $i+1$, that is one step beyond the acquirers' current levels. How much input is needed for SLA? What is a comprehensible input? Under which situation does it occur? Krashen (1991) believes, " When comprehensible input is supplied in enough variety and quantity, it is hypothesized that acquirers automatically receive far better exposure to and practice on those structures they are "ready" to acquire next, as compared to a grammatically sequenced approach" (p. 22), adding that "the best" input shouldn't be grammatically sequenced. If the learners are over-exposed to tedious drills and extensive use of conscious grammatical use, they will focus on the form and not the meaning of the message. He also explained that comprehensible input is not enough without providing the acquirers with an appropriate learning environment with optimal affective conditions. When the learners are not motivated and provided with comprehensible input, "a mental block called the Affective Filter will prevent the input from reaching those part of the brain responsible for language acquisition" (p. 22).

Suppose you were the manager of an **ethical investment** fund, i.e. a fund which invests only in socially responsible businesses. Write a policy statement to inform potential fund contributors about it. Follow the guidelines below.

1- Think over the opening statement in the diagram below. Select two to four notes from the checklist of expanding notes that follow and develop them into supporting statements

The people and organizations that put their money into our fund want us
to invest in ethical ways, <u>and we work hard</u> to make their desires a reality.

Supporting statement 1   Supporting statement 2
            ↓   ↓
     Reason A   Reason B
            ↓   ↓
     Reason C   Reason D

_____
Conclusion
_____
Expanding notes

- Avoid companies that endanger the environment
- Refrain from investing in certain sectors-tobacco, arms, nuclear power, or uranium extraction.
- Not place money in companies that lack ethical labour standards (e.g. using child labour, bad working conditions…).
- Choose to invest in well-managed companies (transparent financial accounting).
- Invest in companies that balance economic growth with social responsibility.

2- write supporting statement in the diagram. Then jot down reasons to explain illustrate your statement.

3- Write your first draft of the policy statement using the relevant information in your diagram

Useful language

- Link words to illustrate: for example, for instance, such as…
- Link words to express cause and result: because, due to, since, as a result, consequently, So + adjective + that …

4-Exchange draft with your partner for error checking. Then write a final version and hand it to your teacher

Source: New Prospects (3 AS course book)

Figure 4.3   Unit two: Ethics in Business: Fighting Fraud and Corruption

As can be seen in Figure 4.3, the writing task is planned for 3AS learners. The instruction is process oriented, providing the students with notes to be expanded. The topic deals with ethics in business, which is related to the unit studied so far. Ideally, the students have already been exposed to the vocabulary (e.g., words related to corruption, child labor and social audit), grammar (e.g., expressing regret, wish), and knowledge of the topic (ethics in business). This means that they are " supposed " to have been

equipped with enough linguistic input and content knowledge. But do the students know what a policy statement does? Do they have prior knowledge about this genre? Do they know its features, and how to write a policy statement? Are they aware about why and for whom they are writing? Do they have the necessary skills to develop a coherent written composition (e.g. syntactic skills, use of cohesive devices)?

Reflecting on my experience as a classroom practitioner, I would say that many students don't know what a genre is, the different types of discourse, its features, organizations or language used to define these written texts. Having them work on their own without presenting or demonstrating models or samples of such discourse makes the writing task more challenging.   Even though, the students are provided with an opening statement, a framework for planning, some notes that can be expanded, and link words that might be useful, it is not enough. Giving the tools without teaching how to use the tools is like throwing non-swimmers into the pool and shouting, "swim!" from poolside (Read, 2010). The students would generally end up by producing paragraphs that lack most of the necessary components as showed in the diagram 4.1 (e.g., organization, syntax, purpose). Others, as what usually happens with struggling writers, just copy and paste the notes given as a support without expanding them as they have quite poor writing skills not only at the paragraph level but also at the sentence level like combining, rearranging, subtracting and expanding. Teachers, therefore, should provide explicit instruction and enough assistance about how to use this input effectively, They should develop students' awareness of the function, such as explanation as described in the task, and draw their attention to the linguistic pattern needed for such function. They need to guide their students through the writing process to help them develop strategies for generating, drafting and refining ideas. Nevertheless, under the pressure to cover the assigned mandatory units with its recurrent language, functions, grammatical structures and language components, and to finish the syllabus on time, teachers find themselves obligated to assign most of the writing tasks as homework for the sake of "time saving." Ironically, the competency-based approach, embraced by the Algerian schools, is not time-based; students progress at their own rates.
 The interactionist hypothesis postulates that providing the students with an interactive learning environment will to a large extent enhance their language proficiency and increase their input comprehensibility. Because language is interactional, "it compels us to create

opportunities for genuine interaction in the classroom" (Brown, 2007, p. 53). Even though interactive learning is at the heart of CBA, it is not promoted effectively in the Algerian classrooms as they are to some extent teacher-dominated and the instruction is still too structural. Writing skill can be promoted through the implementation of interactive courses or techniques. Rivers (1987), for instance, suggests, among other interactive techniques, avoiding a teacher-centered classroom. Hamp-Lyons & Heasley (as cited in Massi, 2001) have proposed list of tasks such as group brainstorming, whole class composing and text construction on the black board that can be used in the writing class to lower the students' affective filter of working alone without assistance and increase their self- confidence. The teachers are required to plan for genuine interaction environment in the class to give the learners an opportunity to negotiate their learning, ask for clarification and feedback, express their ideas and opinions and notice their writing deficiency so as to benefit the most from experience. The main factors that hinder 3AS EFL students to achieve proficiency in writing have been summarized in the following diagrams.
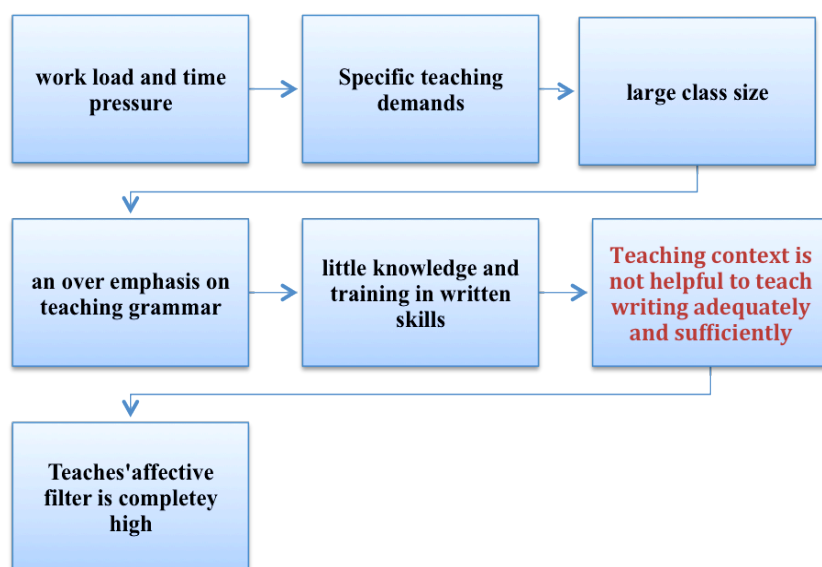
Diagram 4.2: Teaching Context

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                           input                              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ▽
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                        unsufficient                          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ▽
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                beyond learners'literacy abilities            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ▽
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                      grammar-oriented                        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ▽
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Learning environment is not helpful to learn writing skills │
│                   adequately and appropriately               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                              ▽
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              Students' Affective filter is completely high   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
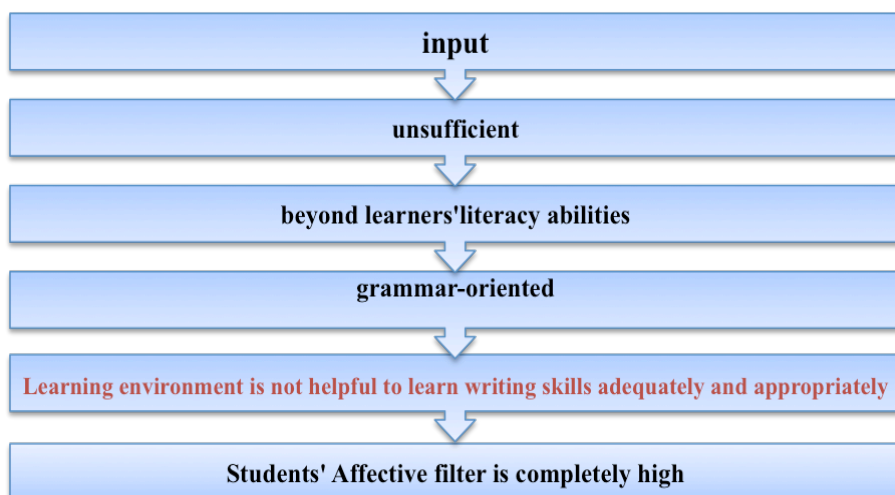
Diagram 4.3: Learning Context

Summary

Writing is a cognitively complex skill that involves many elements. To communicate their ideas fluently, clearly and effectively, students are called upon to develop many skills. Besides, grammatical and mechanical skills, they are required to be able to assemble words, sentences together, developing thoughts and excluding irrelevant ones to create a coherent piece of writing. They also need to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose, taking the reader into consideration. Writing is also an interactional activity that needs to be taught in an interactive learning classroom where the students cooperatively share information, discover and uncover the language " mysteries" and come to each other's aid under teachers' assistance, and feedback. However, a number of factors impede the 3 AS EFL students from developing writing competency. Writing is, unfortunately, taught as a supplementary material to practice and consolidate the linguistic knowledge acquired within the units. This makes writing look artificial and misses the communicative content, the meaning, which is a crucial element in writing. While a great number of the students have quite poor writing skills even at the sentence level, they are assigned ambitious, unrealistic tasks that are irrelevant to their abilities, language proficiency and interests. If the students are asked to write about a topic they do not know much about it or that relates neither to their linguistic nor to their social background and for which they have no semantic repertoire, they will certainly lack the appropriate cognitive schema they need to create a text. Besides asking them to write in a

format with which they are not familiar or unaware of its features without presenting or demonstrating models or samples of such discourse, it is of no surprise to see students writing without any idea about the social conventions of their assigned genre.   The problem is further compounded by leaving them alone struggling with their writing assignment searching blindly for any kind of answer, just for the sake of the homework. Teachers, under excessive work demands and time constraints, tend to be dogmatic about their practices. And although many in-service training and seminars are held every year to enhance the teaching practices, not much is done to improve the teaching of writing skills.

Conclusion

What can we do to help 3AS EFL students improve their writing?
3AS students' writing can improve provided that the students get comprehensible input, which is relevant to their language proficiency, abilities and interests. Classroom experience and composition research emphasize the importance of time and practice in fostering the writing skill. If the students are given enough time to generate, draft, revise and refine their ideas taking the interactional dimension into account, this will certainly take that heavy feeling of isolation and dread from encountering a written task alone. They should be exposed to models of reading and writing and encouraged to read for pleasure as it is well documented that writing ability is enhanced via reading. On the other hand, teachers should re-consider their practices, making accommodations and adjustments to facilitate writing learning. They can make language input comprehensible through a variety of strategies to scaffold their students' writing skill.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN OVERVIEW OF SECOND LANGUAGE WRITING INSTRUCTION

Introduction

For most ESL/ EFL instructors including EFL teachers in Algeria, delivering a writing course remains the most challenging task. How and what method shall I use to teach writing effectively? How can I motivate my students and make them write? Are there any good resources that provide me with strategies I can implement in my writing course? These are just some of the concerns that teachers of English encounter when engaged in teaching writing. Teaching writing effectively remains really a puzzle for many teachers. In fact, many studies have been done to investigate ways to teach writing and enhance students' writing skills but no "magic" formula has been reported so far. The answer is simply: there is no "magic" formula. In attempting to address these issues, we should, first and foremost, analyze both the teaching context (e.g., teachers' methodologies, knowledge, beliefs and goals), and learners' context as well (e.g., learners' levels, abilities and interests, to name a few). We also need to investigate the different writing instructions to find out what each one entails, and how it can support our teaching. This chapter provides an overview of the different orientations to teaching writing. It invites the teachers to reflect so as to develop the most appropriate classroom practice for their teaching contexts.

5.1 Structural-oriented Teaching Approach

Under the traditional approach to language teaching, specifically Audio-lingualism and Structural Situational Approach, writing is mainly concerned with the correctness and form. It is used predominantly to enhance students' grammatical competence. Accuracy and overall organization are regarded as the main criteria to assess the students' mastery of the second language. In a typical structural-oriented classroom, the students are provided with a sample of text to be familiarized with the linguistic patterns. Then, under guided writing, they are supplied with a text and are, for instance, asked to fill in gaps; complete sentences. This is used as a means to reinforce language patterns and help them come up with error-free writing, before they are expected to produce a new piece of writing. Many

of these techniques are used in writing classes mainly to scaffold writing development and restore the confidence of struggling writers (Hyland, 2003, p. 4). However, while language structures have been greatly focused on, the communicative dimension of writing is so far neglected.

5.2 Functional-Oriented teaching Approach

While ESL students need to understand how to use grammar and vocabulary as a component of writing, they also need to understand how to relate these structures to meaning. "This introduces the idea that particular language *forms* perform certain communicative *functions",* and these functions are "the *means* for achieving the *ends* (or purposes) of writing" (Hyland, p. 4). This led to a focus on 'rhetorical functions', which took textual manipulation beyond the sentence level to the discourse level" (Paltridge, 2004, p. 1). Putting a great deal of emphasis on *organization* as an important feature in writing, this orientation doesn't only aim at helping students "develop effective paragraphs through the creation of topic sentences, supporting sentences and transitions" (Hyland, p. 6), but also helping them master particular organizational patterns such as descriptions, narratives, definitions, exemplification, classification, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and so on. In a typical functional-oriented classroom, the students are provided with composing tasks that involve, for example, re-ordering sentences into a coherent paragraph, choosing or inventing an appropriate topic sentence, inserting or deleting sentences, or writing paragraphs from provided information. Like structural-oriented teaching approach, functional one, which is greatly influenced by the structural model, offers good scaffolding for L2 learners (Hyland, p. 7). In addition to understanding the organizational patterns, this approach gives a clear idea about the connection between the purpose of a piece of writing and the form required to convey a message (Raimes, 1983, p. 8). Nevertheless, over-emphasis on accuracy and imitating models can inhibit writers to find their own voices and creative ideas. For that reason, a "process approach" to teaching writing came into being making a shift from a focus on the *written product* to an emphasis on the *process of writing.*

5.3 Process-Oriented Teaching Approach

Often considered as a solitary task, writing is " neither an easy nor a spontaneous activity. It usually requires some conscious and mental effort." (Byrne, 1979, p. 1), such as planning, defining problems, investigating them thoroughly, and proposing solutions. Researchers and classroom practitioners have found that novice writers spend less time in writing, plan and revise less often. They are generally satisfied with the first draft. On the other hand, skilled writers spend much time in writing between planning, and revising, re-reading and producing multiple drafts before they get their product finalized. This provides the teachers with insights into the various strategies the skilled writers adopt, and into challenges the poorer writers experience (Hedge, 1988, P. 20), so that they can help their learners perform the writing skill using appropriate skills and develop their meta-cognitive awareness of their process. And this is what a process writing approach is about. The writing process is a process made of several steps, or sub- skills that writers need before they achieve their final product. This process often consists of three main steps: Planning, writing and reviewing. Diagram 5.1 shows the writing process with a number of operations going on simultaneously and interactively. Although writing involves these steps, as shown in the figure, moving from selecting a topic to brainstorming to composing to revising and then to publishing, it would be inaccurate to see them happening in a fixed order. On the contrary, they are recursive, exploratory, and interactive. The writer can move backward or forward to any of these steps as he/she reviews, refines or adds new ideas. Process writing approach has gained a great deal of popularity and has been regarded as the gold standard that should be implemented for instruction. Unlike the product-writing approach, under which students work under time constraints and the pressure of producing an error-free piece of writing, process-writing approach provides the students with two crucial supports: *time and feedback.* Having enough time to explore a topic along with feedback from either the teacher or the peers, the students, with less stress, will have the opportunity to discover new ideas, and language forms that will be useful in revising and refining their writing (Raimes, p. 10). Additionally, this orientation promotes understanding of what the act and process of writing is (the procedural knowledge), raising the students' awareness about the necessity to participate in a variety of writing tasks (planning, writing and reviewing), and that what skilled writers actually do to develop their writing skills. Despite the fact that this orientation has come up with an

understanding of the different sub-skills that the process of writing entails, no explanation is reported about the way writers generate ideas, refine them, solve problems and making choices as it is difficult to get *inside* "their inner world" and report what is happening (Hyland, p. 13). In fact, as Hyland pointed out "the process of writing is a rich amalgam of elements of which cognition is only one"; therefore, forces outside the " writer's internal world" are to be taken into account (Bizzell & Faigley, cited in Hyland). Besides the procedural knowledge, the students need to be supported with sufficient input such as information about the purpose and the context of writing and the convention of the different texts of the target community to address the cognitive challenge. It is well recognized that learning never takes place in a vacuum. On the contrary, it is deeply embedded in a socio-cultural milieu that necessitates interaction, an engagement with other learners and instructors in joint activities. Thus, learning to write is not a solitary activity as "the mind rarely works alone"(Pea, cited in Barnard & Campbell, 2005, p. 77). Rather, it is a collaborative process under which the more capable partners promote the learning of the less able though the different stages of writing. It should be noted that more recently most researchers of the process model admit that learning is a matter not only of cognitive development but also of *shared social practices*. They highly recognize the importance of implementing socio-cultural theory into the teaching of writing. (See Barnard & Campbell's article for more details).

5.4 Genre-oriented Teaching Approach

Genre-based instruction draws heavily on the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), originally developed by the work of Michael Halliday (Halliday, 1994; Halliday and Hasan, 1989) at the University of Sydney and applied to genre by J. R. Martin, Frances Christie, Brian Paltridge, and others educational linguists. SFL draws upon the premise that language is a social semiotic, systemic potential, a resource from which users make choices to accomplish their purposes by expressing meaning determined by the context.

Figure 5.1 A process model of writing instruction
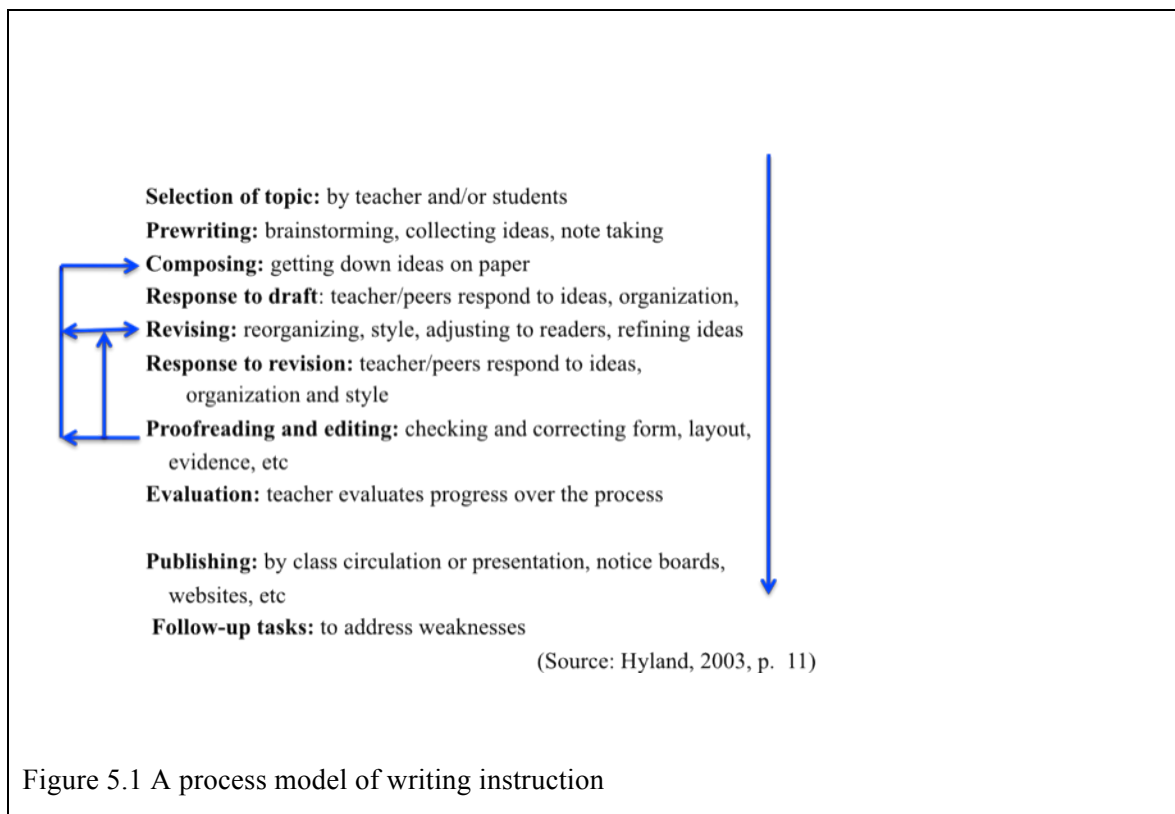
To put it simply:

- Language use is functional.

- Its function is to make meanings

- These meanings are highly determined by the cultural and social context

- Language is a rich system from which users make choices to realize their meaning

"Language is to be understood as text", which is defined as a *linguistic product*, intimately *related* to the *context* that determines what meaning is likely to be expressed and the language to be expressed to realize a *social purpose* (Christie, 1999). Genre-based teaching approach refers to teaching learners how to write a text on the basis of purpose, organization structure and audience (Paltridge, 2001). Thus, genre has a relation with a text. "[w]hen a set of texts share the same purpose, they will often share the same structure" and, therefore will be classified under the same genre (Hyland, 2003, p. 19). So, Genre as " socially recognized ways of using language for particular purposes"

(Hyland, p. 18), requires the writers to follow certain social conventions for organizing their messages so that their readers will recognize their purposes, and therefore, absorb their material. In genre-based pedagogy, the notion of scaffolding is largely embedded in the learning process. The teacher, as an expert in the classroom, provides learners with systematic assistance through the different stages of the writing. When they become capable of handling more on their own, able to reproduce the appropriate rhetorical pattern for the purposes they need to express, then she/he gradually hands over responsibility to them.

In terms of a classroom implementation, the proponents of genre-based approach Derewianka (1990) & Butt et al (2001) suggest the framework of teaching, named as *Curriculum Cycle*. It is worth noting that the Vygotskian principles of ZPD, as shown in Table 5.1, are applied at all levels of the Curriculum Cycle, which consists of two main cycles: writing with the class and writing independently.

Writing with the class includes:

1. The field- building activities/Context exploration: It aims at immersing learners in the context of the text through a series of activities (e.g., pre-listening, reading, speaking) so that learners became aware of the social purpose of the chosen genre. Drawing on Vygotskian principle, it aims at establishing the learners' " actual development"(lin, 2006).

2. The text modeling and deconstruction of the text: also called text exploration, it is the stage in which the genre is explored. It aims at familiarizing learners with the text-type and providing them with enough input concerning the purpose of the writer, audience and text-forms (generic structure of the text, its grammatical structures and transitional signals). In Vygotskian terms, under other-regulation (teacher's explicit instruction and intervention), the object-regulation (in this case, the text modeling) serves at helping learners recognize and internalize the target text type or genre (Lin).

3. Joint production: After being familiar with all the features of a particular genre, the students and the teacher, together, construct a text similar to the one they have studied.

Writing independently involves:

4. Independent construction: After producing a jointly constructed text or understanding of a text, the learners independently produce individual piece of writing.

Many researchers and classroom practitioners claim that genre pedagogy

promises very real benefits mainly for ELLs. It has been argued that second learning occurs more effectively if instruction is made *explicit* to learners. In his theory of "visible" and "invisible" pedagogies Basil Bernstein (1975) pointed out that the more specific the manner of transmission, the more the pedagogy is visible. Learners, through "visible" pedagogy, always know what is expected of them and are aware what is missing in their performance as instructors provide the students with continuous comments. Delpit (1988) added in her article, *"The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children"*, that presenting instruction explicitly "makes learning immeasurably easier" (p. 283). And this is what genre-pedagogy is all about. This orientation provides *explicit* knowledge of discourse patterns and fosters rhetorical awareness of language use. In addition, the process of learning is a series of *scaffolded* developmental steps under which the instructor continuously supports his/her learners until they become able to handle the task on their own. Figure 5.2 shows the benefits of genre-based approach as elaborated by Hyland.

Explicit	Makes clear what is to be learnt to facilitate the acquisition of writing skills
Systematic	Provides a coherent framework for focusing on both language and contexts
Needs-based	Ensures that course objectives and content are derived from students' needs
Supportive	Gives teachers a central role in scaffolding students' learning and creativity
Empowering	Provides access to the patterns and possibilities of variation in valued texts
Critical	Provides the resources for students to understand and Challenge valued discourse
Consciousness-raising	Increases teachers' awareness of texts to confidently advise students on writing

(Source: Hyland, 2004, pp. 10-16)

Figure 5.2: The Main Advantages of Genre-Based Teaching Approach

However, This orientation requires teachers to be equipped with the different genre knowledge, and also to be aware of the choices and variation that writing offers. Otherwise, untrained teachers with little skills in writing and creativity may

present genre models as rigid templates with prescribed structures and a set of rules (Hyland, 2003, p. 22). Instructors are, therefore, required to foster their students'

creativity while making them aware of the different social conventions they need to follow when organizing messages and providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills of the different discourse patterns.

Genre-based stages	Aims	Interaction	Vygotsky's concept of ZPD
1-Context exploration	Immersing learners in the context of the text Activation of mental schema	Teacher-students Students-students	To establish the *"actual development"* of the learners
2-Text exploration	Raising learners' awareness about the text conventions and providing them with enough input about the organization and the linguistic features of the text	Teacher-students Students-students	The model text plays a crucial role as an *object -regulation*
3- Joint-construction	Constructing a text	Teacher-students Students-students	*Others-regulation* takes a central part in this stage. The teacher as an expert, or more capable peers.
4- Independent construction	Requiring learners to work independently	Students	*Self-regulation* Others-regulation whenever needed

Table 5.1: The Application of Vygotskian's principles of ZPD in Genre-Based Approach

5.5 A Process-Genre Approach for Teaching Writing

Observing the principles and class practices of the different writing orientations, it can be concluded that each orientation illuminates just one aspect of writing while missing

others. If product-approach recognizes the importance of equipping learners with enough linguistic knowledge about texts through practice and imitation, they miss basic cognitive processes, central to writing, such as developing "the learners' abilities to plan, define a rhetorical problem, and propose and evaluate solutions"(Hyland, p. 10). While the process approach or the so called "progressivist curriculum" (Gee as quoted in Badge & White, 2000) views writing as a thinking activity and, thus, understands the importance of skills involved in writing (planning, writing and reviewing), it provides learners and in particular English language learners with insufficient input as to what the different texts are that writers produce and why such texts are produced, and fails to give a visible pedagogy of what and how to make use of language patterns to produce a coherent, and purposeful composition. This orientation highly values what the learners bring to the classroom. However, what these English language learners bring to the classroom is their expectations to acquire the knowledge and skills to write effectively in a second language.

On the other hand, genre-approach, regarding writing as a social activity rather than a cognitive one, could make textual conventions visible though explicit analysis and imitation. And it could address the ESL writers' needs to compose for a particular reader and purpose, however; "it can result in perspective teaching of texts, and over attention to written product"(Hyland, p. 24). An effective method to teaching writing would be to use the strengths of one orientation to complete the weaknesses of the other. As Hyland noted, "Writing is a socio-cognitive activity" (p. 23), that requires knowledge of language, knowledge of the context in which writing occurs, knowledge of the audience and the necessary skills in planning and drafting. A process-genre approach, a term coined by Badge and White (2000), incorporates the insights of the different orientations. This approach, a synthesis of product, process and genre orientations, allows the learners to study explicitly the relationship between purpose and form for a particular genre meanwhile using the recursive processing of pre-writing, drafting, reviewing, and editing as a good product depends on a good process. In terms of a classroom implementation, the process-genre approach suggests the following teaching procedure (Yan, 2005), which is divided into six stages as shown in Table 5.2.

Stages	Procedure
1-Preparation	Providing the context in which students will construct their writing. Activating the schemata (Defining a situation that will require a written text), anticipating the structural features of the genre
2-Modeling & Reinforcing	Introducing a model of the genre Students consider why and for whom the text is written (purpose & audience) and how it should be written Discussing the relationship between form & purpose Comparing the text to other texts of the same genre
3- Planning	Activating students' schemata about the topic, brainstorming Discussing and reading associated materials
4-Joint construction	Co-constructing (teacher and students) the text using the processes writing of brainstorming, drafting and revising
5-Independent Constructing	Students compose their own texts on a related topic Teachers help, clarify, or consult about the process
6-Revising	Drafting, revising. Editing

Table 5.2:The Six Stages of the Process-Genre Approach

A process genre-based approach is considered as an enriched mode to teach writing. It retains the essential stages in process writing as the framework of instruction, taking into consideration the socially and culturally recognized ways of using language for particular purposes. To complement the weakness in the genre approach, with its over-emphasis on form in writing, this orientation gives learners opportunities to consider, investigate, experience and compare a variety of genres and not only one as in genre-based approach a way to understand their situated use and variety. The learners will come up with their own

products, not the ones preconceived or imposed by the instructors.

Conclusion

"No one way to teach writing but many ways"(Raimes, p. 11), would be the answer to the teachers' inquiry about the best method to teach writing effectively. Therefore, teachers shouldn't limit themselves to practices derived exclusively from one approach. They should be informed about the different trends that have occurred recently and draw on the best of what these orientations suggest, taking into account their teaching contexts. Teachers should be aware that writing is nonlinear, a composing process that requires multiple drafts, time, and that learners need assistance through the stages of the process before an effective product is created (Brown, p. 403). While writing is often considered a solitary act, it is also social and interactional (Hyland, p. 27) as learning to write never occurs in a vacuum. Writing effectively seeks not only to achieve accuracy. Learners need to have enough knowledge about the topic, the different genres, the readers and their expectations and the skills to carry out a composition.

CHAPTER SIX
SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORY AND SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Introduction

While biological factors and internal disposition are a necessary condition for cognitive development, it is through interaction and engagement with others that elementary mental functions develop into higher mental processes such as problem-solving, voluntary memory and attention, rational thought, planning, and meaning- making activity (Lantolf & Thorn, 2006). Socio-cultural theory (SCT) draws heavily on the work of Vygotsky and his colleagues whose major theme is that social interaction plays a crucial role in the development of cognition. SCT argues that learning is basically "a mediated process that is organized by cultural artifacts, activities, and concepts" (Ratner as cited in Lantolf & Thorn, p. 197). It advocates that learning is not an isolated mental effort; rather it is assisted and mediated by tools and signs (Turuk, 2008) that facilitate the co-construction of knowledge. The present chapter describes briefly the main principles that underlie the SCT. Its main intent is to see what this theory offers to English language learners, to help them surmount the challenge of learning, mainly the writing skill, to a manageable level.

6.1 The Socio-cultural Theory Basic Principle

SCT grew from the work of "the Mozart of psychology" Lev Seminovitch Vygotsky (1896-1934). The main principles that underlie the Vygotskian framework can be summarized as follows:

a) "Learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human psychological function" (Vygotsky, as cited in Mcleod, 2007). While the Piagetian perspective of learning emphasizes that children's stages of development must precede their learning, the Vygotskian perspective argues that children build new concepts by interacting with others. *Learning, therefore, tends to precede development.*

b) *Language plays a pivotal role in mental development.* Language is used not only as a tool to communicate and transmit culture and history between individuals but also as a tool to regulate the cognitive processes and shape the form of thought. "The rules for encoding semantic relations in words are originally learned from discourses regarding concrete events of high interest and meaning to children" Bandura, 1989, p. 14). Through a process of *Internalization*, external speech, or dialogue, is facilitated by private speech. In his/her attempt to control the task, the child uses "egocentric speech" which is elliptical in structure such as "Hmm . . .let's see… what if I . . .no, no, no, that wouldn't work, but what if I..." (Walqui, 2006, p. 161). As speech is internalized, it changes shape, both syntactically and semantically" (Walqui), it is transformed, reorganized and reconstructed. Language is, therefore, the driving force to thinking and understanding.

c) *Mediation is central to learning.* Mediation is the mechanisms through which external, socio-cultural activities are transformed into internal, mental functioning (Huong, 2003). Vygotsky regards tools as mediators. These tools can be a physical object, for instance, a string around one's finger as a reminder, a behavior of another person in social interaction or a semiotic tool (Huong) in which language is "the most pervasive and powerful cultural artifact that humans possess to mediate their connection to the world, to each other, and to themselves" (Lantolf & Thorn, p. 201).

d) *Learning has it origin in social interaction.* Much important learning occurs in social interaction between a child and a more knowledgeable other (parent, teacher, peers or others). Under this interaction, or "co-operative or collaborative dialogue," the tutor provides verbal instruction and/or model behaviors and the tutee seeks to understand and internalize the action or instruction (Mcleod) using the process of internalization. This socially- guided learning develops cognitive competencies and paves the way to self-directed learning (Bandura, p. 13).

e) *The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*. ZPD is one of the most widely and well-known ideas associated with Vygotsky's work. The theory elaborates the

ability of learners to move from what they have already understood (actual development) to possible new knowledge (potential development) provided that a more skilled or knowledgeable person is available to help. It is frequently defined as:

> [t]he distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

<div align="right">(Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) Mind in Society</div>

6.1.1 A Four Model-Stage of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP)

The concept of ZDP has been explored widely in different educational studies in many subject-matter areas, including reading, writing, mathematics, science, second-language learning. As the paper deals more with teaching practices subject matter, it would be appropriate to tackle ZDP concept in the light of this subject matter. In this case, I should refer to Tharp and Gallimore's seminal work " *In Rousing Minds to Life Teaching, Learning, and Schooling in Social Context*"; to examine how the concept has been explored, using a four-stage model of ZDP. The model shows how children develop speech and language through the ZDP, emphasizing the relationship between self-regulation and social regulation. (See Figure 6.1).

Stage one: *Assisted Performance*

This stage takes place when the child is learning a new skill. At this level, he/she needs assistance from parent, teacher or more capable peer, with expertise in the skill. It is through directions, modeling behaviors and familiarizing him with the process and procedures involved that the child comes to understand the meaning of the performance. "The child can be assisted by other means-questions, feedback, and further cognitive structuring" (Tharp & Gallimore, 1998). Such assistance, referred to as "*scaffolding,*" holds the task difficulty unchanged; yet, the child's role is facilitated by means of graduated assistance from the more knowledgeable other (Greenfield in Tharp & Gallimore). In this process, learners are not passive recipients. On the contrary, they are

active participants as their feedback, questions, wonders and other responses "*assist the adult to assist*"(Tharp & Gallimore, p. 36; italics in original) and be ready to promptly monitor and guide the performance. During this stage, as the learner's abilities increase, the adult's responsibility for task performance steadily declines. The assistor hands over the responsibility to the learner only if the latter is able to handle the task on his/her own, shifting from other regulation to self-regulation.

Stage two: *Unassisted Performance*

During this stage, the child or learner carries the task without relying on the assistor. However, the second stage is still considered a beginning stage since the learner has not attained full capacity. The child uses self-speech, self-directed strategies and all possible ways to acquire the skill. Yet, his/her performance is not fully developed or internalized.

Stage three: *Full Internalization*

In the third stage, learner's knowledge reaches the point where he has internalized the skills necessary to perform the task smoothly and with proficiency. Expert assistance is no longer required. In fact the intrusion or advice of the expert would now be irritating, as the learner has fully developed his/her own level of expertise. Vygotsky described this stage as the "fruits" of development. He also described it as " fossilized" as it is so fixed that it becomes hard to change it (Tharp & Gallimore).

Stage four: *De-automatization and a recursion back through the ZDP*

De-automiszation occurs when capacities fall into general decline. In other words, "what one formerly could do, one can no longer do" (Tharp & Gallimore, p. 39). This de-automatization may be due either to personal crisis, sudden trauma, gradual erosion of skills due to age, or major life changes. If the lost skill or knowledge is to be restored, then the individual is required to go through the developmental process. In some cases, self-regulation is often effective and adequate in restoring competence. But in other cases, a further recursion, other assistance, may be required to regain mastery.
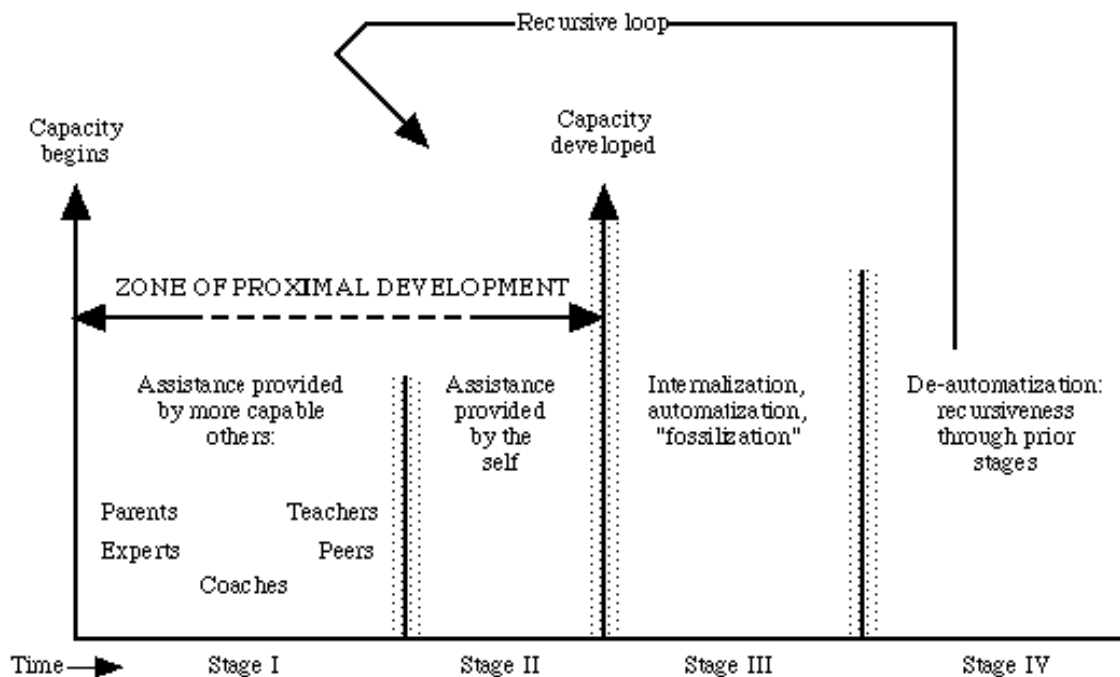
Figure 6.1:Four Stages of ZDP   (Source: Tharp & Gallimore, 1998, p. 35)

The interaction of parents or more capable others and children is a fundamental tool to help children progress. For that reason, teachers should shift their attention, as Tharp & Gallimore noted, to this essential pattern of interaction and assisted performance and implement them in their daily practices.

6.1.2 The Metaphor of Scaffolding

The concept of ZPD has been amplified, modified, and elaborated into new concepts by other socio-cultural theorists.   Scaffolding, as one of the most popular teaching strategies applied to the educational field, is considered to play a crucial role in facilitating learners' comprehension processes. This concept originates from Vygotsky and his socio-cultural perspective that looks at the important contributions that society makes to individual development. It postulates that learners acquire knowledge and new strategies of the world and culture through socializing and interacting with others.
Scaffolding, as a metaphor derived from the work of Wood et al (1976), is based on the assumption that children need the guidance and assistance of adults or more capable

peers to facilitate their learning development before they can function as independent agents. The scaffolding strategy provides supports or " *scaffolds*" based on the learner's zone of proximal development (ZPD).

6.1.2.1 Pedagogical Scaffolding: Definition and Features

   "Like so many things in life, educational work is a unity of structural and processual ingredients" (Van Lier, p. 50). To put it simply, any educational activity is an amalgam of two elements, the structure (the structure of a curriculum) and the process (the procedural activity of doing it). Structure and process are independent and go hand in hand. Effective pedagogy comes from a flexible structure designed in a way to facilitate learning rather than from static one that impedes it. Moving from macro (the curriculum) to micro (the lesson), planning a lesson is a part of every day teaching. However, it is unwise to think of a lesson plan as a straitjacket in which " every moment goes according to plan"(van Lier, p. 52). In so doing, we are, in fact, denying two facts: the diversity of students' backgrounds and the fact that teaching is a dynamic, and interactional process. Students come to the class with different background, different interests, levels, dreams, aspiration, schema, motivation, and so on. Hence, there is, and should be, different reactions to what is taught in the classroom. A little reflection on our daily practice showed that we, most frequently, face events (e.g., a question raised by a student) that were never expected or thought of, or included in our lesson plan. As learners work together, different goals and sub-goals emerge; the teacher's goal will also shift in response to the learners' performance (Tharp & Gallimore). This means that our teaching practices and plans should be, therefore, dynamic, changeable, and open to revision according to the unpredictable (Walqui, 2006; Van Lier, 2007). And this is what pedagogical scaffolding is all about. Pedagogical scaffolding "must be seen as *both* a design feature *and* an interactional process"(Van Lier, p. 59; italics in original). It takes place on three-time scale (van Lier):

   Macro: planning (a syllabus, a chain of tasks, a project, etc.) over a long- term
                period.

   Meso: planning the steps of a particular activity or task.

   Micro: moment-to-moment interactional work. (p. 60)

In other words, pedagogical scaffolding is a structure, a set of guiding rules, and a planned

lesson. Without this structure, the teaching process, undoubtedly, would result in disorder and chaos. Yet, at the heart of a well-planned structure there is this learner-more capable others interactional pattern where the more capable assist and guide the students' learning process. However, this assistance shouldn't be seen only as a guiding process but also as a creative, autonomy-supporting process (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005; van Lier, 2007). In this way, pedagogical scaffolding is seen more as *interactionally driven pedagogy* rather than a curriculum or teacher-driven education.

Despite the fact that Vygotsky has never used the term scaffolding, it is an inherent part of his theory of learning as collaborative and *interactionally driven* (Hammond & Gibbons). Nevertheless, these features (social interactions) are refined and expanded to be specific to schooling. van Lier (2004), has identified six features: *continuity, contextual support, inter-subjectivity, mutual engagement, contingency, handover and flow.* According to van Lier (2007) all of the three scales of pedagogical scaffolding have the six features described as follows:

a) Continuity

To create a classroom in which learners feel secure, tasks need to be motivating and built upon students' prior knowledge. They also need to be graded according to the level of difficulty moving from simpler, less challenging tasks, to more complex. Nevertheless, providing a challenging task requires the teacher's assistance. Assistance, in this sense, shouldn't be regarded as simplifying the task. Rather, it keeps the task difficulty constant, while simplifying the learner's role by providing appropriate scaffolding (Greenfield in Tharp & Gallimore).

b) Contextual support

Exploration is encouraged in a safe, supportive environment where the "Affective Filter" is completely low.

c) Inter-subjectivity

Learners need to work in a collaborative environment where mutual engagement and rapport are established. Learning is facilitated and encourage in a shared community of practice.

d) Contingency

Teaching must be student driven rather than curriculum oriented. Teaching processes are adjusted in the light of emergent practices and learners' contributions and actions.

e) Handover/takeover

By definition, scaffolding is temporary. As the teacher observes that students are ready to take over the skill, she/he gradually hands over responsibility to them (Walqui), providing either scaffolds or challenges as the need emerges.

f) *Flow*

If learners are assigned challenging tasks with the appropriate amount of scaffolding, they will be interested, motivated and then, focused on the task. As the learners are completely immersed and absorbed in the activity, they will "forget" that they are learning. And *it is* under this state that learning may happen most efficiently (Krashen, 84).

6.1.2.2 Key Attributes of Effective Scaffolding

How much scaffolding does a learner need to achieve his/her optimal learning? Tharp and Gallimore pointed out that the means and pattern of assistance provided to the learners are varied and all depend on their performance and perceived needs. While some learners need high levels of assistance, others may require minimal support. If the learners' comprehension and skill increase, assistors need to abbreviate their help (Rogoff & Gardner, Wretch & Schneider in Tharp & Gallimore, p. 40), prompting and inciting the learners to go further with the task. However, if the truncated assistance fails, the assistor may adjust the level and amount of guidance adding additional hints, and cues that the learners need to proceed. Thereby, "The more the child can do, the less the adult does" (Wertsh et al., in Tharp & Gallimore, p. 41). Based on his personal experience about the different kinds of teaching styles and their effects on the students' learning, Mariani (1997) has provided us with an elaborated analysis on how to keep an appropriate balance point between a challenging teacher/task, the student's level of performance and the amount of support provided. For instance, in case the students are assigned challenging tasks without enough support, their affective filter will be high as they will be frustrated and anxious. But if they are assigned challenging tasks with the appropriate amount of

scaffolding, they will be interested, and motivated. This has been summarized in Table 6.1.

Degree of challenge	The amount of support	Results on learners
High (tasks are too far, out of reach).	Inadequate	Frustration, anxiety
Low	High	Comfort but little learning & growth
Low	Low	Disengagement, boredom de-motivation & misbehavior
High	High	Maintenance of appropriate ZPD, self-esteem, learning occurs

Table 6.1: Challenge/Support Frameworks

6.1.3 Scaffolding Instruction for English Language Learners

Despite the fact that the teaching and the learning context in Algerian secondary school is not helpful to teach writing appropriately and adequately, this does not make the case hopeless. The SCT has provided education with scaffolding as an effective teaching strategy. When scaffolding instructors pay attention to learners' abilities and needs, they use the most effective strategies that take the students from where they are and lead them to higher level of understanding through assistance and tailored support. Many different facilitative tools can be used in scaffolding students' learning such as modeling, cooperative learning, activation of background knowledge, visuals, breaking a larger task into smaller parts and prompting. The time is right for these Vygotskian's notions of instructional scaffolding to be widely adopted in our schools.

6.1.4 Implementing facilitative tools in classrooms

6.1.4.1 Modeling

Modeling for students is a cornerstone of scaffolding. It is based on the premise that Language plays a pivotal role in mental development. Hogan & Pressley defined modeling as a "teaching behavior that shows how one should feel, think or act within a given situation" (cited in Lange 2002, para. 5). Modeling shouldn't be thought as a passive, mindless imitation expected on the part of the learner (Lantolf & Thorne). Rather, "it is intentional and self-selective behavior on the child's behavior" (Tomasello, in Lantolf and Thorne, p. 204). Modeling is, thus, bringing to the surface the inner speech, the complex thinking process that underlies any cognitively demanding task to help the learners understand, recognize and internalize the thinking strategies used to approach trouble spots. In this sense, modeling fosters meta-cognitive capabilities through *explicit instruction*. Based on the work of Hogan and Pressley, Lange has identified three kinds of modeling: *think-aloud modeling, talk-aloud modeling and performance modeling*. Lange has explained in depth the difference between the three types of modeling as summarized in Table 6.2, adding illustrations from literature. In addition to modeling the desired behaviors, offering explanations, inviting student participation, verifying and clarifying student understandings, and inviting students to contribute clues are other strategies that can either be integrated or used individually (Hogan and Presley in Lange), depending on the nature of the task and the students' performance and perceived needs. At the beginning of the task, the teacher needs to explain thoroughly and repeatedly what is being learned, when and why it is used, and how it is used (Lange, 2002). But as the learners progress and gain experience, the instructor should abbreviate his/her help to hints or prompts reminding them whenever they get off track. Lange added that the teacher is advised to invite the students to take part in the task at hand, ask questions, and share their knowledge without fear of criticism. And she or he continually checks their understanding, keeps maintenance over time and offers feedback. Modeling is also done through shared writing. Following the steps of the process of writing, and with the contribution of the learners, the

teacher models the full process, addressing the problems that the students are having in terms of

 grammar, spelling, cohesion and so forth (Cooper et al., 2011). The instructor, of course, is not the only reference that can provide modeling. Learners also provide modeling for each other when engaged in cooperative learning activities. In sum, learners' acquisition of cognitive competencies depends mostly on modeled expertise from those who are highly knowledgeable and skilled in the relevant domain (Bandura, p. 13).

Types of modeling	It is…………	Illustration
1-Think-Aloud	Verbalization of thought *Telling* *(What is going on in the mind?)*	Can be used mainly to develop reading comprehension strategies a) Demonstrating how to draw inferences from a text/ elaborate details b) Self-questioning c) Connecting new information to prior knowledge
2-Talk-Aloud	Verbalization of the thought process or problem solving while demonstrating the task *Saying and doing* *Telling and showing*	Can be used to model all phases of the writing process a) Demonstrating verbally how to link ideas/ use cohesive markers. b) Modeling how to avoid redundancy
3-Performance modeling	Demonstration of the task to be completed without involving any verbal explanation *Doing*	a) Instructors might model sustained silent reading by reading a book and either moving their lips b) Smiling at a funny part of a story C) Performing an act in a text

Table 6.2: The Three Kinds of Modeling

6.1.4.2 Bridging

Every person possesses mental structures that organize knowledge, experiences, and attitudes about something. This mental framework, called schema, is an important cognitive component that helps us understand, interpret, process the new information and even make prediction. If someone encounters a difficulty to comprehend and assimilate the new information, it might be traced either to the fact that the person lacks the prior knowledge or it might be the information received doesn't fit his/her schema. Schema theory, first introduced in the work of the psychologist David Bartlet and later developed by Piaget, Rumelhart and expanded by Anderson, has been documented to have a crucial role and profound effect in language acquisition. Cognitive psychologists claim that in order for learning to take place and progress, prior knowledge or schema, which is stored in the cognitive structures, need to be activated. In so doing, Ausubel (1960) suggested implementing the appropriate *subsumers,* called advance organizers before introducing any new material. Subsumers, a kind of mental learning scaffold, serve to activate the relevant schema to the end that the new material can be easily *subsumed* into the existing cognitive structure. "If building understanding is a matter of weaving new information into pre-existing structures of meaning", then teachers are required to help their learners connect the unknown to the known through well planned activities (Walqui). This can also be done through the implementation of schema activators such as KWL charts, graphic organizers, and informal quizzes. Activating prior knowledge is critical to learning because it retrieves what the students already know, helps them understand new information, make prediction, elucidate misconceptions and increase retention.

6.1.4.3 Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning, as an effective instructional strategy, is one of the core concepts of SCT. It is based on the premise that learning has it origin in social interaction. Vygotsky pointed out

> Learning awakens a variety of internal development processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environmental and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent developmental achievement   (Vygotsky1978, p. 31)

As Vygotsky claimed, the child's (the learner) external dialogue with others (the more knowledgeable others) is, first and foremost, the driving force to the awakening of learning. This dialogue is gradually internalized to become a major resource for cognitive development. In this view, learning is regarded as a social and active engagement with others rather than a solitary activity. Many researchers have developed many instructional programs based on SCT concepts of dialogue and scaffolding. Palincsar and Brown's "Reciprocal Teaching" technique, to cite but a single example, is one of the contemporary applications of Vygotsky's theory that has been widely used and documented to be effective method in enhancing students' reading comprehension strategies. Palincsar and Brown claim that if much of learning occurs outside of school in a spontaneous engagement between a child and adult, this natural dialogue ought to promote learning in school as well (in Tinzmann et al., 1990). In this method, teacher and students collaborate and *take turns* in learning and practicing the four skills: summarizing, questioning, clarifying and predicting described as "four comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring activities" as they are selected to enhance as well as check comprehension (Palincsar & Brown, 1984, p. 121). Initially, the teacher does the "think-aloud", modeling the four activities prior to ceding the responsibility to the learners to take their turns as dialogue leaders.Cooperative learning, pairing or group work, involves students working together towards the achievement of a common goal. Vygotsky pointed out that when children interact towards a common goal, they tend to regulate each other's actions (Tinzmann et al.). Nevertheless, cooperative learning shouldn't be understood as placing the students into groups and leaving them to work on their own. On the contrary, implementing cooperative learning approach in the classroom requires the careful structuring and management of the group taking into account the group dynamics of the class. If implemented successfully, cooperative learning helps students connect their prior knowledge with new information, increase their understanding of the content and develop higher level thinking skills.

6.1.4.4 Visual Scaffolding

According to Vygotskian's principle, learning doesn't occur in empty wilderness, it is *mediated* through the use of tools, often called, *"mediational-means."* Whether it is semiotic, a sign, a physical object, etc., these mediational tools   are central to learning. They are used as " aids in solving problems that cannot be solved in their absence"(Turuk, p. 245). Taking different forms: pictures, props, graphic organizers, flashcards, posters, templates, films, and so on, visuals play a vital role as mediational and instructional tools in pedagogy. Research showed that using visuals in teaching enhance learning and increase retention to a large extent. Drawing on a research done by Stice (1987), it has been observed that if people retain 10 percent of what they read and 26 percent of what they hear, their retention increases to 30 percent if they are exposed to visuals, and it will increase further to 50 percent if visuals are accompanied with verbal language. To make a curriculum more supportive, instructors should incorporate visuals in their classes with whatever students' age and at whatever stage. For instance, visuals can be used at any stage of the process of writing. A picture, as the adage goes, is worth a thousand words. A single still picture, if chosen and used appropriately, can convey complex concepts and abstract words such as "tenderness, passion, hatred etc.," saving
much time in verbal explanation. It also generates a large amount of input. Pictures can be collected from different resources. Linda, a schoolteacher, shares her strategy:

> First, I save every picture from every magazine, calendar, and newspaper. I have my student aid cut them out and then I laminate them. I sort them into big manila envelopes into 1. People 2. Animals 3. Landscape scenes 4. Single objects 5. Situational scenes in which people may be talking or laughing or crying... Then I use them for EVERYTHING.

And they can be a very useful reference whenever needed. She added:

> When we do short stories, I give each person an envelope in which I have put 2 to 3 people (characters), 1 place picture (setting) and 1 picture from the situational.

After we have discussed the "elements", they begin to write their own short story based on what they have in front of them. 6. When I teach a vocabulary word that is a little more difficult, I always go to my stack to find one that illustrates it. For example, I found a perfect picture of a clear blue lake with not one ripple to show them "placid". They never forgot that word.

(Source: adapted from Teachers.Net, Linda, 2000)

As shown, Linda's strategy with pictures brings enormous benefits:

a) activating or building background,

b) teaching vocabulary,

c) making complex ideas and words more accessible and memorable, showing " a clear blue lake with no ripple" to explain the word " placid",

d) serving as elements of a story " characters, setting etc." that students themselves will develop

In the same vein, teachers can ask their students to bring their own photographs (realia) to explore them to teach different types of writing, for instance, describing their families, friends, a process, places they have visited, an event, sharing experiences, telling stories and so forth. Moving pictures, such as a video film, can be even more powerful as it combines sound and vision and present complete communication situations (Lonergan, in Liang, 2006). Videos, picture prompt, schema activators graphic organizers, provocative pictures, use of multimedia can be explored during pre-writing stage to elicit and brainstorm ideas, build background knowledge, collect data, outlining, etc. Graphic organizers, that come in different forms such as flow charts, time lines, are immensely acknowledged to be beneficial particularly to those with organizational difficulties. They can be used during the process of writing to help students identify key points and recognize relation between ideas, for instance cause-effect relationship. In this regard, the power of visuals shouldn't be underestimated. As "short-cuts," and " less is more tools," they reduce the cognitive demand on learners, ease their information processing and increase comprehension. As time-saver, they help teachers save much time in verbal explanation that might be overwhelming for students. However, if they are complex, not planned and chosen carefully and appropriately, they might impede more than help learning, and *be* more time-consuming than saving. If visual materials, as mediational and anchoring tools,

are central to learning, teachers need to learn to teach visually. Integrating visuals in teaching will develop students' visual literacy. And developing students' visual literacy will equip them with cognitive capabilities in using and designing these tools and hence become themselves the facilitators of their learning.

Conclusion

Vygotskian's pedagogy has given teaching a new definition. Rather than treating learners as empty vessels waiting to be filled, teaching in the SCT perspective is regarded as assisting the learners to perform just beyond their current capacity. Teachers use the mediating tools of the language that can be modeling devices, visual materials, or any other kind of support. Such mediators transform elementary mental functions into higher mental processes such as strategic orientation to problem-solving, rational thought, planning, and meaning- making activity. Learning, in the socio-cultural view, never occurs in vacuum. Instead, it is gained through social interaction and engagement with others. In this interaction of give and take between a challenging teacher and learning students (Thorp & Gallimore, 1991), learners are active constructors of their own knowledge, and adults or more capable peers are assistors, providing scaffolds, "just enough and just in time" (Walqui), to facilitate their learning before they can function as independent agents. In this sense, scaffolding aims at helping the learners to develop the three "SELFs": self-sufficient, self-regulated and self-confident learner.

In the foregoing chapter, we will explore the application of the SCT principles, and see what a constructivist class looks like. Many different facilitative tools have been documented to be very effective in scaffolding and enhancing students learning. However, I will invite you to explore four main strategies that I myself have implemented in my ESL reading and writing class during my training at the University of Connecticut (UCCON) and which proved to be very successful. Drawing on the SCT theory to inform practice, the following chapter focuses mainly on the teaching practices using scaffolding strategies. The chapter explores four scaffolds namely bridging, modeling, cooperative activities and the use of writing frames and graphic organizers. Teachers might integrate them in their writing lesson plans not only to help their learners improve their writing skill but increase their motivation and engagement as well.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Involve me and I…will understand

USING CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES STRATEGY

Learning is a social process. It increases when students collaborate.

(Social Constructivism Theory)

Introduction

Vygotsky (1978) points out, "Human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them" (p. 88). It follows that learning has its origin in social engagement and interaction with others. It never takes place in a vacuum. Learning is neither a purely inner process, nor is it a passive molding of behaviors *(McMahon, 1997)*. It is rather a lively and dynamic exchange of different learning processes based on each student's background, prior knowledge and contribution. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of social interaction in forming understanding and, therefore, recognizes interdependence between cognition and context. This context highly validates the implementation of collaborative learning where students work in groups, interact and collaborate in order to achieve a common goal.

7.1 Definition of collaborative learning

Collaborative learning as part of the constructivist theory, states that knowledge is a social construct. It refers to an instruction method in which students, regardless of their performance levels, ethnic backgrounds, economic class and gender, work together in small groups toward a common goal. The students are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own. It means that all students need to know the material for the group to be successful.

7.2 Collaborative Learning Versus Cooperative Learning

The term "collaborative learning" has sometimes been used interchangeably and synonymously with " co-operative learning." This is understandable since both:

- involve active learning over passive and lecture -based teaching,
- require a specific task to be completed,
- favor small group students participation,
- emphasize the knowledge, attitudes, and interests students bring to the learning environment,
- support a discovery based approach to learning.

However, there is a slight difference between co-operative and collaborative learning mainly in terms of students' responsibility and autonomy in tackling the tasks and sharing roles and also in terms of teacher's role in-group work activities. In cooperative learning (CL), which is more structured, the teacher provides the direction for learning and requires a specific product (paper, report, poster, etc.). Thus, the emphasis, as Myers explained, is more on the final product of learning (in Damien, 2007), which is closely controlled and determined by the teacher (Rockwood, as cited in Damien). On the other hand, in collaborative learning, students receive less instruction. They have more responsibility about their product. The instructor abdicates his or her authority but would be available for any consultations or monitoring. The students develop a very strong ownership for the process as they already use social skills in undertaking tasks. Using collaborative learning depends on students' knowledge and high level of thinking, their abilities to determine group actions undertake responsibilities and tackle tasks using their own authority. In this paper, I would use the term "cooperative learning," as I am dealing with struggling writers, with little fundamental knowledge and interpersonal skills, and who need support and teacher assistance.

7.3 Cooperative Learning Principles

Robert Slavin, Roger & David Johnson, and Spencer Kagan are among the prominent figures of cooperative learning. Even though they have slightly different approaches and emphases, they all agree on the following principles as the cornerstones of this learning approach:

- Positive goal interdependence: "The outcomes of students are linked; the better the contribution of any team member the better their team mind map"(Kagan, 2011, p. 1).

- Individual accountability: "The better the performance of each, the better the performance of the group-their outcomes are positively correlated"(Kagan, 2011, p. 2).
- Social Skill development
- Face-to-face interaction

Kagan uses the acronym "PIES" to refer to the four essential principles: **P**ositive Interdependence, **I**ndividual Accountability, **E**qual participation and **S**imultaneous Interaction, which should be implemented in any activity.

7.2.1 What Does Cooperative Learning Look Like?

- All of the team members have to assume roles and contribute positively to make group task a success.
- Teams are heterogeneous in gender, race, experience and abilities.
- Students work in small groups and their outcomes are rewarded based on the group's performance (Slavin, 1980).
- Even though cooperative learning is learner-centered, teachers have a paramount role to play in structuring the lesson. They need to provide a conducive environment and appropriate tasks for equal opportunities. They are required to structure and manage the group and make sure that the students are motivated, fully engaged, dedicated and support each other.

7.2.2 The Benefits of Cooperative Learning

Compared to competitive and individualistic learning, cooperative learning has been proved to be a very powerful approach. Its positive effects on achievement are very well documented by researchers, doing over hundreds of research studies, working in different orientations, in different settings and countries and in eleven different decades (The Johnsons & Stanne, 2000). (See Table 1). After using a meta-analysis method on all research studies that compare cooperation, competition and individualistic learning, the Johnsons and their colleagues concluded that cooperation is to be much more efficient and

effective in producing achievement than the other interaction patterns (Roger T. & David W. Johnson, 1981). Research studies have proved that cooperative learning:

- Promotes students' learning

- Develops students' social skills

- Prevents and treats antisocial behavior often noticed in classrooms such as alienation loneliness, and low self esteem (The Johnsons & Stanne)

- Increases students' retention and motivation

- Builds closer connections between students, students and their teachers, students and their learning

Cooperative Learning Methods	Time Period	Researcher
Learning Together	Mid 1960's	Johnson & Johnson
TGT (Teams-Games-Tournament)	Early 1970's	Devries & Edwards
Group Investigation	Mid 1970s	Sharan & Sharan
Constructive Academic Controversy	Mid 1970's	Johnson & Johnson
Jigsaw	Late 1970's	Aaronson & Associates
STAD (Student Teams Achievement Divisions)	Late 1970's	Slavin & Associates
TAI (Team Assisted Individualization)	Early 1980's	Slavin & Associates
Cooperative Learning Structures	Mid 1980's	Kagan
Complex Instruction	Early 1980's	Cohen
CIRC (Cooperative Integrative Reading and Composition)	Late 1980's	Stevens, Slavin & Assoc

Table7.1: Modern Methods of Cooperative Learning

(Source: The Johnsons & Stanne, 2000)

7.4 Using CL activities as "Scaffolds" to Engage and Enhance Students' Writing: Applications and Implications

As discussed in chapter four, asking students to write on their own and putting pressure on them, without enough support or interaction with peers will certainly makes writing a challenging task. The students will become frustrated as they are left alone on the desert

island without any guidance. They might make some attempts, but being in this situation, helpless and hopeless, they may give up at the beginning of the process. Implementing cooperative activities in the class will certainly be the right choice to reduce the feeling of isolation and frustration because all the students work together interdependently to get the problem solved. They could be used during the process of writing with its different steps, brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing.

7.4.1 Timed-Pair-Share

This is one of Kagan's structures that has been widely used and proved to be very effective strategy. It has been noticed that generating ideas remains the hardest part of writing, mainly with struggling writers. They spend much time casting around, looking for anything to fill the empty page. Timed-Pair-Share can be used to help the students get involved *together* in the process of brainstorming to minimize their frustration, fear and anxiety of getting started. (See Figure 8.4 in Chapter Eight).

Procedure

- Write the topic or question to be brainstormed on a flip chart or board
- Pair-off students (1-2)
- Have the students decide which one will speak first. It can be decided, for example, according to whose date of birth comes first
- Have the students (1or 2) speak for a specified length of time while the others (1 or 2) listen carefully without interrupting their partners. They are encouraged to take notes
- The other students (the listeners) speak for the same period of time
- Have the students summarize, and share with the class what their partners have said
- The students can write what their partners have said (in short phrases) on the board or flip chart.

Implication

This activity allows the students to "share the floor" equally. It validates everyone's ideas as all the ideas are welcomed. This motivates them to take risks. Besides, it

helps them restore their confidence in their ability to write as the problem of getting started is solved.

7.4.2 Jigsaw

The social psychologist Elliot Aronson and his students invented this teaching strategy in Austin, Texas, in 1971. It is an information-gap based strategy (Richard, J.C. 2006). The members from different group with the same aspect of the information needed to complete the task meet and discuss the material. After mastering the material, they become experts. These experts will join the home group and teach the material to the group members. It is an effective way of engaging students both with course material and with each other.

Procedure

- Divide your lesson or the material to be taught into segments
- Divide your class into small groups. The number of groups generally depends on the number of segments you have
- Appoint a leader with an interpersonal learning intelligence whose job is to head up the group and assure equal participation for all the members
- Assign each student to learn one segment
- Give your students enough time to read over their segments
- Call on the students with the same segment to meet, and discuss their part, making sure that everyone understands and master his/her assigned part. They are thus called the "Expert group"
- Call on the student " expert groups" to return back to their home group to teach each other and present a well-organized report " teaching groups"
- Intervene whenever required. Make sure that the process goes well
- Give a quiz on the material being discussed at the end. (See Diagram 7.1).

(Elliot Aronson)

Application

Genre: a short story

By the end of the writing lesson, students will be able to:

❖ ***Write a story report*** including the five elements of the story namely the setting, the characters, the conflict, the plot and the theme.

❖ This activity has been implemented in my Reading and Writing class when I was doing my internship at the University of Connecticut at UCAELI (American English Language Institute). The students are ESL intermediate level. They are international students coming from different countries and cultural backgrounds.

Procedure

- Give your students time to read the story (The unicorn in the Garden)
- Divide your class into 5 groups
- Assign each student to identify and write about one element of the story using one of the charts:
    - a) Element one is the setting, see chart 7.2
    - b) Element two is the characters, see chart 7.3
    - c) Element three concerns the sequence of the story including the conflict, see chart 7.4
    - d) Element five is the theme of the story and its sub-themes, chart 7.5
- Call on the students with the same writing task to meet and discuss their part, and complete the chart
- Call on the students "the experts" to join their home group to discuss all the elements and prepare writing their reading report. The product will be *a story report*
- Clarify your expectations. Tell the students the process you want them to use to write a report, give them a rubric to evaluate their performance
- Provide your students with a writing frame, which serves as a support around which the students structure their own ideas and direct their writing towards a particular purpose using appropriate text pattern signals. (See Chart 7.6, Story Report Planner)

- Students monitor and evaluate their work relative to the rubric
- Gallery walk, peer-assessment, teacher-assessment

Implication

After the inclusion of this cooperative activity, I have noticed the following: The students were more engaged and motivated to learn than if they had to work independently. They paid attention to each other's answers, asked for clarification and intervened for assistance. In fact, these learners have multiple perspectives, learning styles, experiences and aspirations and also different languages abilities, strengths and weaknesses. The activity was an opportunity for interaction and talking. And it is in this interaction that these learners benefited from each other's strengths (Strengths can be vocabulary, organizing ideas, using the cohesive devices appropriately, spelling, mechanics etc.) and it is in this talking "that much of the learning occurs" (Gollub, 1988).

The students' feedback was as follow*:*

They felt a certain responsibility and pressure (positive pressure) as they were expected to teach their groups. They had to listen actively, concentrate, ask for clarification to understand and take notes.

- It is well documented that optimal learning occurs when the teachers provide both pressure and support. The learners will be less motivated provided that they have a great deal of assistance without any kind of pressure that push them further (Kagan, 2011).

Developing BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills)
& CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency)

Listening, speaking, taking notes
• Summarizing, paraphrasing
• Interaction, involvement, participation
• Engagement
• Shared responsibilities
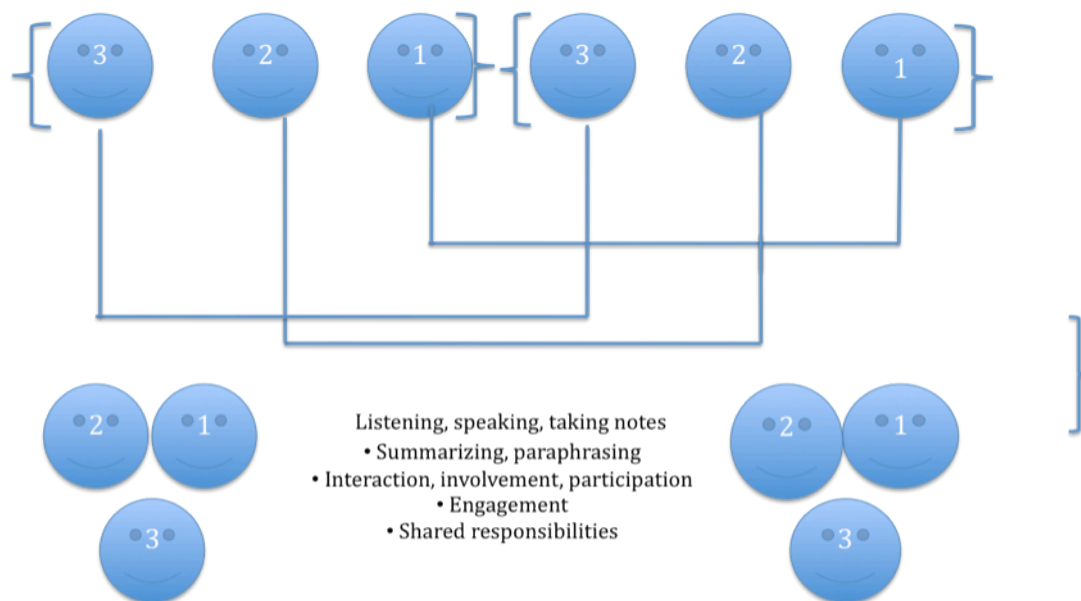
Diagram 7.1: jigsaw activity

Setting

Where and when did the story happen?

How? (describe the landscape/ scenery/seasons or weather)

Where?
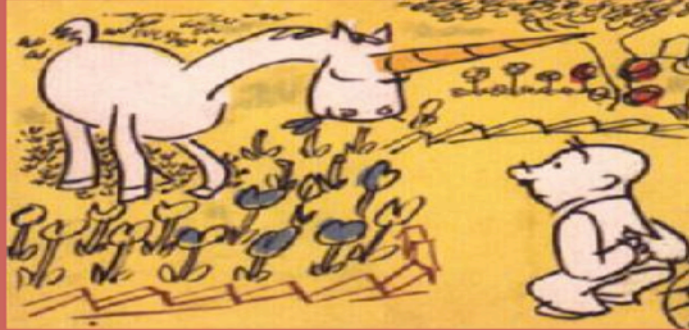
When?

How?

Where? (Time)	When? (place)	How? (Scenery/season …)

The picture is retrieved from: http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/TheUnicornInTheGarden

Chart 7.2 Graphic Organizer for the Setting

Characters Chart

Instruction: write the character traits of the characters in the story. You can choose an appropriate adjective from the word bank on the poster. In the third column, say how the trait is demonstrated in the text.
(e.g. actions, words, attitudes, feelings are good indicators of characters' traits)
 An example is provided for you**.**

Characters Who/what?	Trait Characteristics	indicators
wife	unfriendly	She opened one **unfriendly eye**

Chart 7.3: Characters' Chart

Plot Chart

Problem

Event 3   Event 4

Event 2   Event 5

Event 6

Event 1

Sequence	What Happened?
Event1	
Event 2	
Event3	

Chart 7.4: Plot Chart

Theme chart

Instruction: The theme is the main idea of the story. It is generally implied rather than stated explicitly. Read between the lines to find the theme and sub themes

Sub-theme

Sub-theme

Sub-theme

Theme

Sub-theme

Sub-theme

Sub-theme
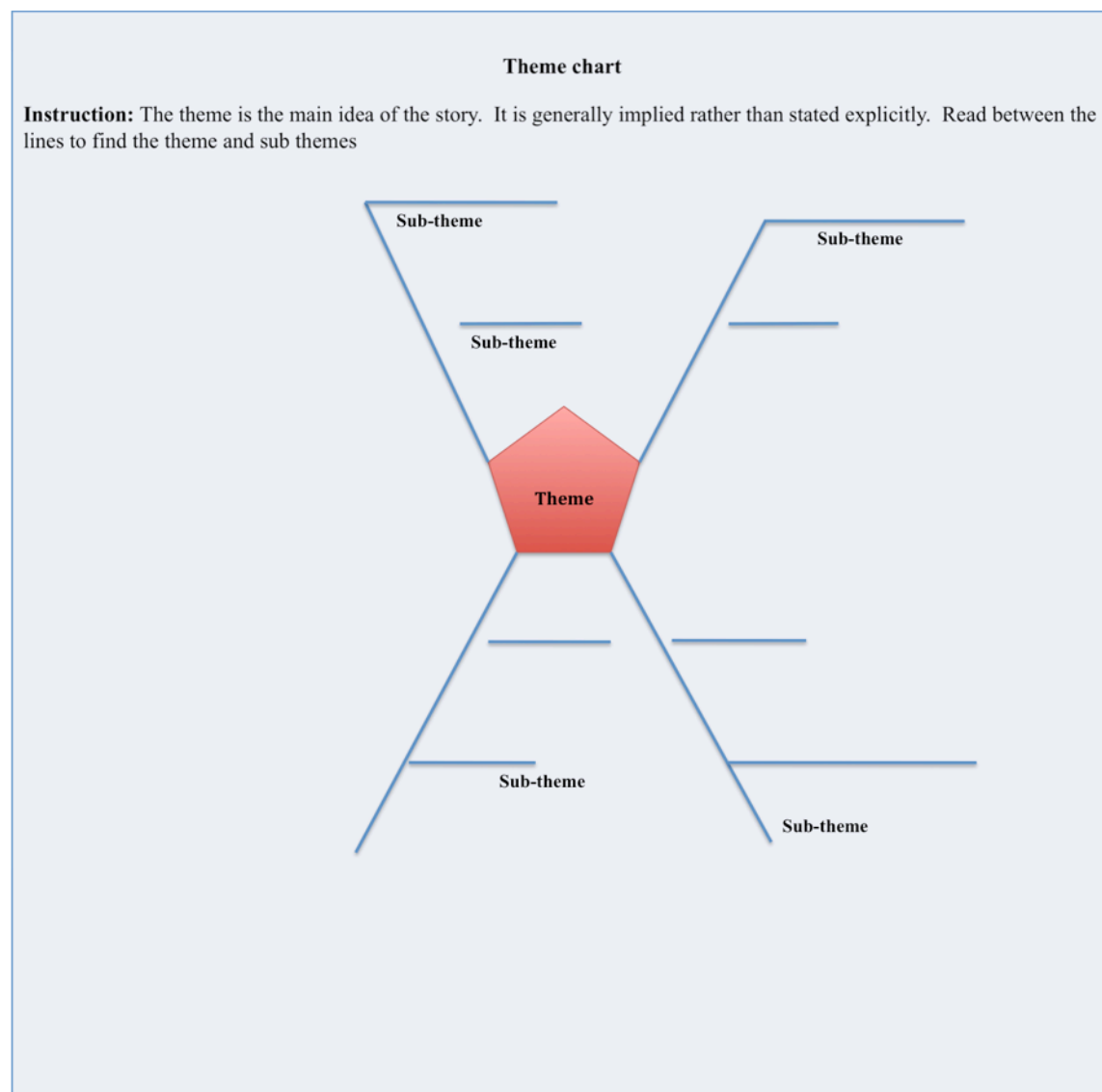
Chart 7.5: Theme Chart

Story Report Planner

Introduction	The story title is………………. It is written by………………………..
Characters & characteristics	……………is the main character. He/She…………………………………….. The other…………………………………………………………………………..
Setting	The story happened in ……………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………
Plot	The story started…………………………………………… The big problem is…………………… At the end, ……………………………………..
Theme	The main theme is……………….

Chart 7.6: Story Report Planner

7.4.3 Folded Value Line (Kagan)

Students line up as they agree or disagree with a value statement. They exchange viewpoints with students standing next to them. Then, they fold the Line-Up to interact with those with a different point of view.

Application

　　Genre: argumentative essay, for or against?

　　Purpose: Brainstorming ideas

　　Material needed: a string, cards

　Procedure

- Tape a long string to the floor and place labels at each ends
- Explain the activity to your students

- Announce an argumentative topic to your students. For instance:

> Censorship is sometimes justified

> Some people think that the budget devoted to space programmes is wasted money
> Source: New Prospects, the Algerian English Syllabus for 3AS, p. 160)

- Elicit which students are strongly supportive of, or against the idea
- Have the students whose answer is a strong "yes" stand at one end of the line and those who totally disagree stand at the other end
- The other students (neither strongly agree nor strongly disagree) stand somewhere in between. Form a rank-ordered line and number the participants from 1 up
- Have the students select the number which is considered to reflect their opinions
- Pair-off students (with similar view points) with persons standing next to them to exchange and explain rationales for their viewpoints
- Have 2 pairs to join to form a group of 4. This gives the students the opportunity to remember, consolidate and practice the language.
- Have the students with opposite views from the 2 halves of the line face each other, articulate and explain rationales for their positions. See diagram 7.7.

⬥ It is also possible to integrate Timed Pair Share structure in this activity. Using a specified   length of time, the students rotate and exchange views. You can randomly select the students to summarize the views they have heard.
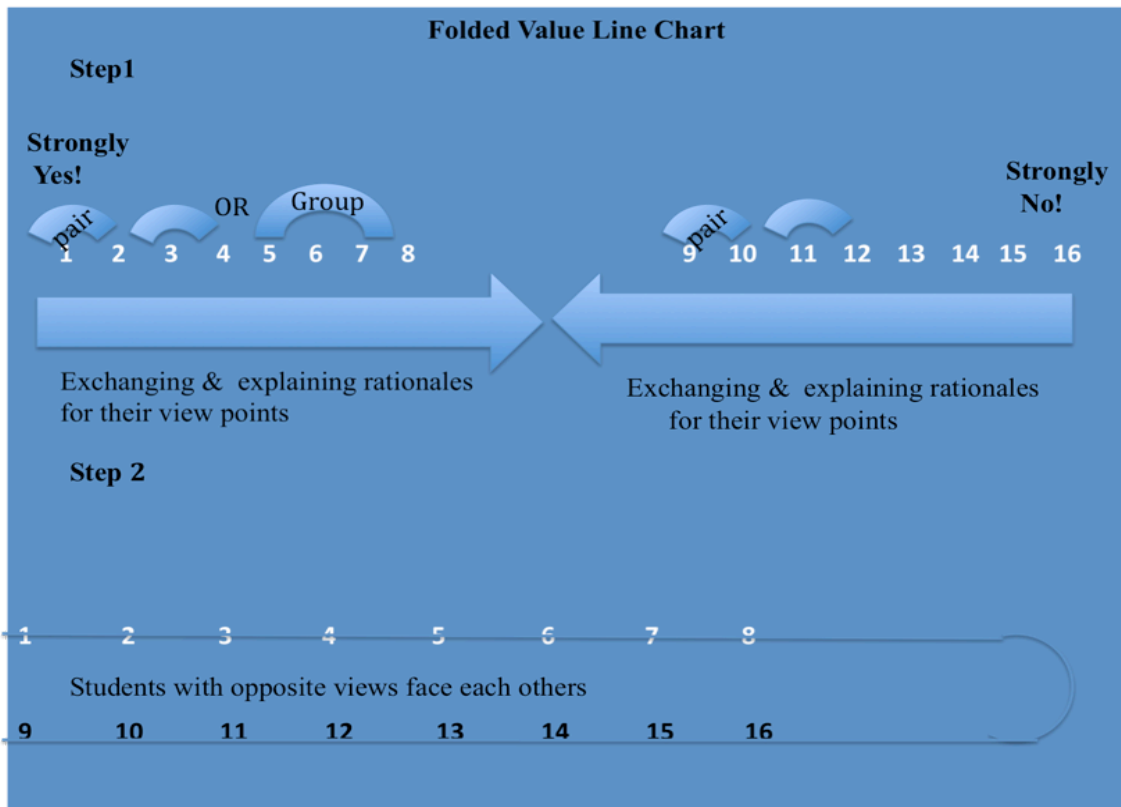
Chart 7.7: Folded Value Line Chart

Implication

The Folded-Value-Line is among other cooperative learning activities that have gained favor and fervor within the educational community. Its positive effects are countless:

- Learning English as a foreign language necessitates the exposure of learners to the four skills.
- The Folded-value line, as used in the activity above, integrates the four skills.
- Through conversation and discussion, the students activate and/or build their prerequisite knowledge necessary for their writing task
- The activity boosts the students' motivation and self-confidence. It takes that heavy feeling of isolation and dread from traversing a written task alone; there is comfort in company.

- It enables the students to benefit from the resources their peers represent. Some may be very knowledgeable about the topic. Other may be strong in vocabulary, spelling or any other component of the language.
- It helps at activating and/or building schemata
- It helps at developing critical thinking as the students evaluate and consider an issue from different perspective
- It enhances BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) including mainly social turn-taking skills and interactive and extended discourse skills
- It provides the students with an opportunity to practice their summarizing and/or paraphrasing skills
- It is very appropriate for Kinesthetic learners
- Fosters class spirit by allowing students to work with their classmates

For or Against Chart

Instruction: Take notes on both sides of each argument

For	Against
Argument 1	Argument 1 ....
Reason: fact/example	Reason: fact/ example
Argument 2	Argument 2 ....
Reason: fact/example	Reason: fact/example
Argument 3	Argument 3 ....
Reason: fact/example	Reason: fact/example

Chart 7.8: For or Against Chart

7.5 From Interdependency to Independency

The illustrative example above demonstrates how the students, in a very collaborative atmosphere and under the guidance of the teacher, have experienced all the processes of writing, and are made *aware* of all the steps before achieving the outcome " writing the report." The steps are:

1- reading the text (The Unicorn in the Garden) that offers students an opportunity to identify the distinctive features of a short story

2- Jigsaw reading to identify the main elements of the story

3- providing a writing frame using appropriate text pattern signals

4- writing the report

5- peer assessment using a rubric

6- teacher assessment and feedback

Scaffolding, as pointed out by Bruner, is "a process of 'setting up' the situation to make the child's entry easy and successful and then gradually pulling back and handing the role to the child as he becomes skilled enough to manage it" (1983, p. 60). Scaffolds are by definition temporary. For that reason, they can be reinforced, reduced or removed completely depending on the students' capabilities to handle the task on their own. Extra scaffolds should be provided whenever the learners still require assistance. Otherwise, they should be taken away as the students achieve a greater level of knowledge, skills and are able to do the task competently and independently.

7.5.1 Towards Competency and Independency: Reducing the Scaffolds

If the teacher observes that the students can, or to some extent are able to handle the task on their own, he/she can gradually reduce the scaffolds or take them away completely. The following example illustrates how this can be done:

Genre: a short story *(To Build a Fire by Stephen Crane)*
By the end of the lesson, students will be able to write *individually* a story report.

The students will work cooperatively (using jigsaw technique) to identify the main elements of the story. You can refer to the procedure above. After that, the students, individually, will write a story report.

7.6 Speaking and Listening as a Springboard to Writing

The Folded Value Line activity provides the students with enough opportunity to talk, generate ideas, and discuss their opinions. And it is through this discussion that they acquire insight and information as everybody in the group shares each one's accumulated knowledge. The activity either helps activate or build the students' background knowledge about the topic discussed before getting them engaged in writing. The teacher can integrate a graphic organizer, as in Figure 7.8. After having the necessary "scaffolds" that is to say, generating enough ideas through discussion, having the students working together, and providing the students with a graphic organizer, the students, now, collaborate to summarize the points discussed. The graphic organizer will serve as a word bank, a reminder of the main ideas being discussed, and also of the layout, that is to say, how the essay will be structured in their writing.

7.7 Using Cooperative Activities in 3 AS EFL classes: Challenges & Opportunities

Learning never takes place in a vacuum. It is neither a purely inner process, nor it is a passive reception of knowledge and molding of behaviors *(McMahon, 1997)*. Learning takes place through dialog among learners via social context. Language is interactional. "We send messages, we receive them, we interpret them in a context, we negotiate meanings, and we collaborate to accomplish certain purposes"(Brown, p. 212). It has been argued, "the best way to learn to interact is through interaction itself"(Brown, p. 212), as providing the students with an interactive learning environment will, to a large extent, enhance their language proficiency and increase their input comprehensibility (interactionist hypothesis). The interactive learning classroom will most likely involve the use of cooperative activities like the ones stated above. Unfortunately, it is not promoted effectively in the Algerian classrooms as they are to some extent teacher-dominated and the instruction is still too structural. Still a good number of English teachers recognize the

benefits of interactive activities in the classroom; however, they, most of the time, shy away from them. This is due to, including but not limited to, the following reasons:

- They are time-consuming particularly with large classes. Much time is spent in grouping students re-arranging their desks, and explaining the instruction.
- Some students may feel hesitant to participate
- Other students get distracted
- They are not manageable in a class where students have little language proficiency
- Class management might be in trouble and teachers might lose control
- Teaching is more exam-driven. In the case of teaching exam classes (classes where the main focus is on preparing students for a national exam), teachers' main concern is to cover the assigned mandatory units and prepare the 3AS EFL for the BAC exam. This gives little room to teachers' agenda to plan for interactive courses.

My application of cooperative learning has been somewhat challenging too. Admittedly, it is not an easy matter to introduce cooperative activities if the students' education (3AS EFL students) has been hyper teacher-centered. Breaking old habits is really an uphill fight; nevertheless, it is never impossible. Implementing this new way of learning will certainly call for much time. Yet, once the students get accustomed and feel comfortable with the process, then less time will be spent for each lesson. It is worth pointing that CL is more useful in EFL classrooms than in any other context where students greatly need interaction. It is also worth mentioning that CL is not about placing the students into groups and leaving them to work on their own. This generally leads to "tangential chitchat and other behavior that is off-course from the class objectives"(Brown, p. 218).

Teachers, required to be aware of the group dynamics of their classroom, should structure and manage the group and make sure that the students are assigned roles, motivated, fully engaged, dedicated and support each other. To implement cooperative learning in the class effectively and efficiently, instructors need to have much reading about this approach, and observe other teachers who are, successfully, using it either in real classrooms or virtual ones (See the video, in the list of the reference). Getting informed about the different techniques will help the instructors to make the right decision whether they are suitable for their context and would be worth a try or not

(Palmer, Peters, & Streetman, 2003). According to Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (as cited in Palmer et al.) there are several tasks that should be followed either before-during or after the implementation of cooperative activities. They can be summarized as follows:

1-Pre-implementation task

- Explain the instruction carefully making sure that all the students understand the activity and give the handout including all the steps.
- Determine group size and assign students to groups. Before moving to a different group, students stay in the same group for a while to develop a cohesive group.
- Plan instructional material to promote interdependency. The material is prepared in a way that every one will contribute to the group success
- Assign group roles (e.g., facilitator, timekeeper, recorder, summarizer, checker).
- Explain criteria for success. Communicate the group-work skills that will be evaluated (using a rubric as an assessment tool).
- Specify desired behaviors. Teach the students how to work in groups (e.g., respect, listen to other, praise, taking turns, and shared decision making). Have this list of group norms on a handout for each group to prevent group discord and off-task behavior
- Assigning group roles in writing tasks can be a timekeeper, recorder, summarizer, spelling checker, reader etc.
- To save time (mainly in the case of 3AS students), teachers can give the handouts including the instruction in advance for students to read and discuss before the class starts.

2-Implementation

In this stage, the students play an important role. While they are engaged, feel responsible, and work together taking the group norms into account, the instructor monitor the groups' work intervening whenever needed.

3-Post-implemenation

- Provide closure through summarization.

- Evaluate students' learning.

- Reflect on what happened. Both teachers and students reflect on what happened. Teachers should keep record of what worked and what hindered and why it worked and/or hindered and what they would change or keep next time. They also get feedback from the students about how they thought the lesson went. In turn, they will also have to provide feedback to the students about their group work skills and their assignment.

Conclusion

Learning is a social process. It increases when learners collaborate. Asking students to write on their own and putting pressure on them, without enough support or interaction with peers will certainly makes writing a challenging task. Writing skill can be promoted through the implementation of interactive courses that involve cooperative activities. Classroom researchers have offered a variety of interactive activities that can be used and adjusted according to teachers' context, specific circumstances and their philosophies and practices (The Johnsons & Stanne, 2000).   Under the assistance of the teachers, the students work collaboratively to activate or build their schemata, generate thoughts, link, and revise their ideas and so forth. Through cooperative activities, the learners discover and uncover many " mysteries" in the language; they can increase their semantic repertoire, be aware of the different skills included in the writing process and much more. If the teachers plan group work ahead of time taking account of the group dynamics of the classroom, there would be enormous benefits.

CHAPTER EIGHT
BRIDGING
Activating and Building Background Knowledge

Introduction

  Every student comes to the classroom with a unique experience, attitude, conceptual understanding and background knowledge, in other words, with unique schemata. Prior knowledge, variously described as world knowledge, memory storage, experiential background, frames or scripts refers to all the knowledge that we have acquired through our lives. It is a very important component for the comprehension of new information. However, a large proportion of the 3AS EFL learners' difficulties can be traced to insufficient *content schemata* and/or *formal schemata*. Content schemata refer to the background knowledge on the topic whereas formal schemata refer to the background knowledge about the organizational patterns and rhetorical conventions of written texts (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). Many of the struggling writers that I, as a practitioner, have observed in the classroom have limited background knowledge for topics they are assigned to write about. If there is nothing within students' scope of knowledge and experience with which to relate, they will certainly encounter difficulties starting to write. And even though they know quite a bit about a topic, they may be unaware of the connection and relevance of what they know to what they are writing and discussing. Therefore, the student's environment is failing to bring this prior knowledge into action (Strickland, Ganske & Monroe, 2002, p. 145). This happens mainly because students do not have enough linguistic competence that helps them either to understand what's going on in the class, communicate and converse or transfer their world knowledge using the target language. Our role as educators is to capitalize on students' world knowledge and experiences whenever we prepare our lessons plan, providing enough background information about the topic, genre text format, conventions and language required for the topic.

8.1 Why is Activating Background knowledge Useful?

  It is worth noting that activating students' background knowledge is the most important part of the reading and writing lesson. Without this prior knowledge, readers and writers and mainly the struggling ones, would have little chance successfully to process their

tasks. Activating background knowledge helps students to make connections between past and present learning, to have the necessary scaffolding upon which they can place new concepts, ideas and facts.

8.2 Strategies for Activating Schema: Application and Implication

Strategies such as mind mapping, think-pair-share, K-L-W charts (K-What I *know*, W-what I *want* to learn, and L- what I have *learned)*, anticipation guides, graffiti/carousel brainstorming, and picture walk are very effective to access students' experiences, emotions and opinions. Referring either to literature or my teaching practices, I am going to illustrate how we can activate students' prior knowledge using some of the aforementioned strategies.

8.2.1 Mind -mapping (Word Webbing activities)

Linguist researchers point out that a word acquires its full meaning with reference to other related terms. And it is through this association that we get a full meaning of words. These terms " tend to *keep close* to each other in the mental lexicon" (Italics in original) and are recalled easily when they are put in context (Julian, 2002, p. 520). For instance, the word "wind" is usually related with, "it blows" (Moon, cited in Julian). Mind mapping is about making this mental and covert relation between words overt. It is a graphical and visual thinking tool used to represent the interdependence of words. Mind mapping aims at visualizing, generating and classifying words.

Application

Instructors should implement this activity not only to generate interrelated words, and create new ones, but also make students aware of the fact that the more links we develop between words, the easier their retention and retrieval become and the larger our lexicon repertoire will be.

 Procedure
- Write the word of focus "nucleus word," or draw an image in the centre (e.g., Valentine Day"
- Ask students to tell you everything they can about the word or picture

- Develop the related words or sub topics around the central word or topic, connect each of them with a line
- Generate the lower-level sub topics using the same procedure
- Keep the web visible throughout upcoming lesson (see Figure 8.1).
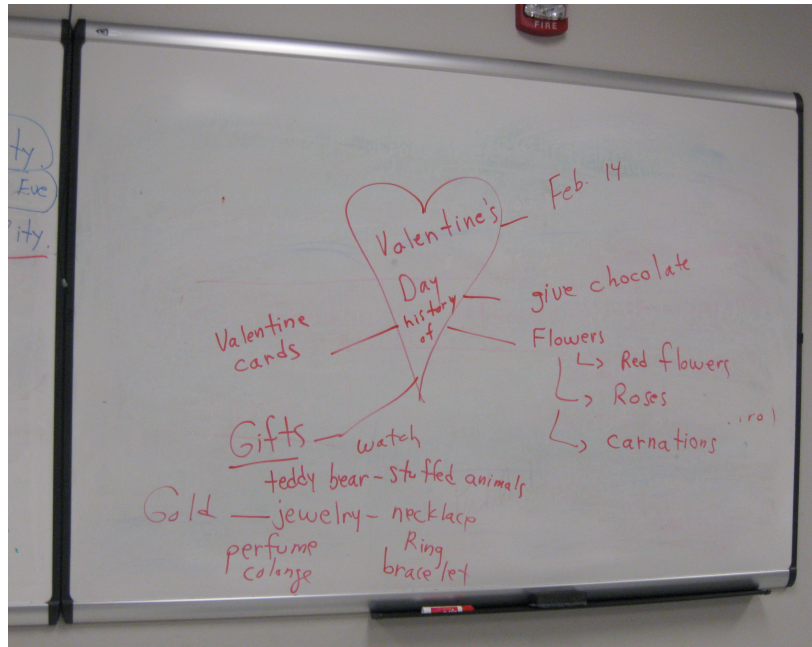
Figure 8.1: Mind mapping- Valentine Day

8.2.2 Think-Pair-Share (TPS)

This is a collaborative learning strategy in which students work together to solve a problem or answer a question about an assigned reading or writing task. It is simple but effective in activating students' background.

Procedure

- Teacher poses a provocative question
- Pass out a Think-Pair-Share worksheet to each student. See Figure 8.4 or Figure 8.5
- Teacher provides students with "think time" to think about the question
- After that, students turn to face their "learning partner" and working together sharing experiences and knowledge, discussing, reminding each other, clarifying etc. Discussing an answer with a partner engages students in the pair then, they share their ideas with another pair, or with the whole class. See Figure 8.2.
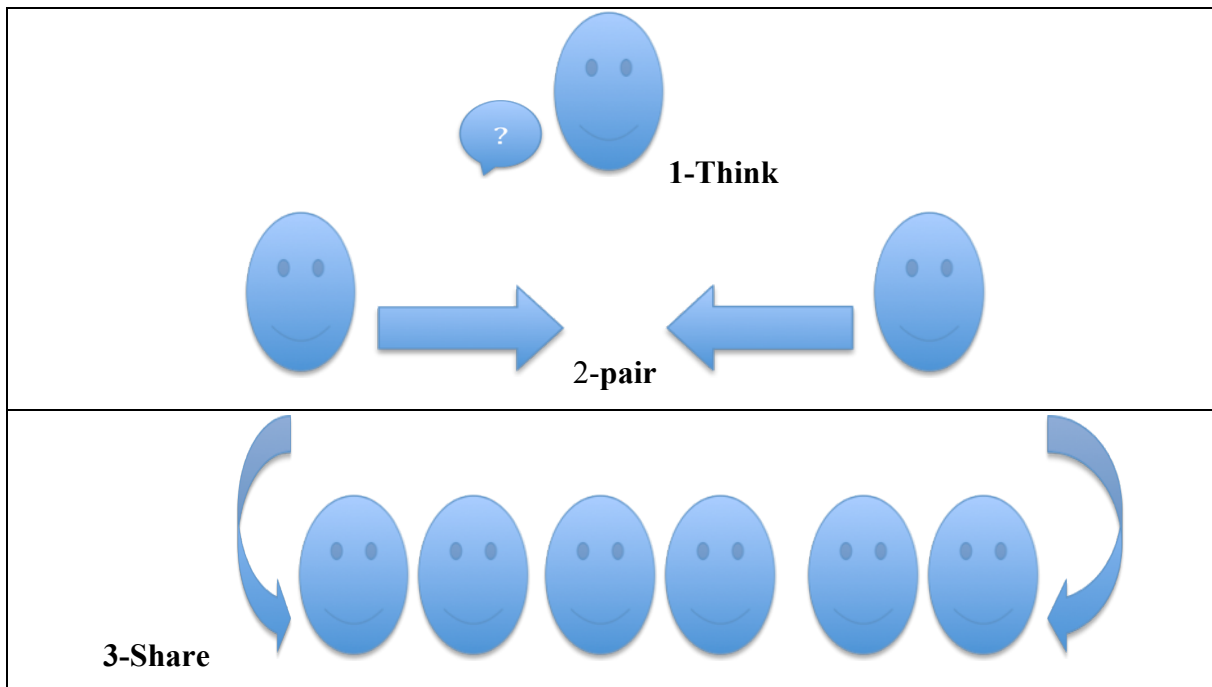
Figure 8.2 Think, Pair, & Share

Topic discussed for the writing assignment: Child Labor

Prior to asking students to start writing about child labor, causes, consequences and measures to eradicate this unethical practice, teachers, first, should engage them on what they already know about the topic and activate their prior knowledge, giving them the opportunity to share experiences and thinking through a provocative picture, as shown in Figure 8.3, and question(s). See Figure 8.4. Teachers should provide assistance whenever required, for instance helping students with the necessary vocabulary, bringing their experiences into action, and articulating their thoughts. In addition, it would be helpful to write down all useful words and expressions related to the topic such as ethical, unethical, children's rights, abuse, exploitation, defend, eradicate etc. either on posters or the board. Students might refer to them once engaged in their writing assignment.

Figure 8.3: Child Labor

(Source: http://lewebpedagogique.com/myspace/2010/10/)

Question/prompt	What I thought	What my partner thought	What we will share
Examples: 1-Describe the children in the picture. 2- How do you feel? 3-Why do think they are in this situation? 4- Does the picture remind you of a similar situation?	**Possible answers**: Children holding heavy bricks. I feel sad. They might be homeless, poor. They need money for survival. It reminds me of our neighbor's child whose age is 12 and works a server in a cafe.	They look tired, unsafe, and unclean. It is a risky job. It is disgusting picture Their families might have obliged them to work because they are poor and need money. It reminds me of an Indian movie whose title is "Slumdog Millionnaire" that describes how street children are exploited and abused.	Exploitation of children Children are deprived of their rights

Figure 8. 4: Sample Think-Pair-Share Sheet

My question:

_____

Think

During the next 5 minutes, think about your answer to the question above. Write your response on the lines below:

_____

_____

_____

Pair

Now, pair up with your partner to exchange ideas? What ideas did you have in common? Write those ideas below:

_____

_____

_____

Share
Using your "Pair" ideas, decide upon one major idea to share with the whole class. Write that major idea below:

(Source: Instructional Strategies for Engaging Learners Guilford County Schools TF, 2002*)*

Figure 8.5: Think, Pair, share sheet

8.2.3 Word Splash

Developed by Dorsey Hammond at Oakland University in Michigan, word splash is another strategy used to bring students' prior knowledge and experience into action. It is a collection of key words or concepts chosen from a passage which students are about to encounter so often. These key words are splashed on the black/white board or displayed in power point. The students, then, are asked to predict how the words might relate to the passage. After making a prediction, the students read the passage to check their speculation. This strategy doesn't only tap on the students' prior knowledge but it instills their motivation and warms them up for the lesson. I will illustrate how I used this activity with my ESL students not only to make them predict the plot of the fairy tale but also to activate their knowledge about the conventions of this genre.

Application

I prepared the students for the reading passage. First, I asked them to recall the fairy stories they have read, heard or watched before and they were encouraged to write speculatively about what will happen in the story. To help them make predictions, my learners were given key words of the text. The splashed words represent the main elements of the story namely *the setting* " once upon a sunny morning-garden", *characters*" husband, wife, and the unicorn" and *events* "saw" and other helping words such us *crazy, mental institution* (see Figure 8.6). After that, my students were invited to compare and appreciate each other's predictions and then compare their prediction with the original text. I used this technique because I wanted them to *write before they read* to provide them with enough room to bring their own experiences, knowledge and cultural background into play. This activity allows the students to actively engage and grapple with the story, giving different hypotheses. Besides, predictions of this kind transform learners into authors of the text. In her article *Writing One's Way into Reading*, Vivian Zamel (1992), points out that as reading provides comprehensible input for writing, writing also paves the way for comprehensible input for reading. After this negotiation with the text and getting the necessary comprehensible input, the students read the text, check their prediction, scan and read between the lines to go deeper into the story.

Figure 8.6: Word splash

8.2.4 Graffiti-Carousel Brainstorming

Graffiti is a technique that activates students' knowledge through movement and conversation. The students rotate around the classroom in clockwise order, in small groups. While at each station, they will stop for a designated time, activate their prior knowledge of different topics or different aspects of a single topic through conversation and interaction with peers. They discuss and negotiate the topic providing support for new information. Each group will share ideas posted at each station for whole class discussion (see Figure 8.7). Graffiti technique is usually used interchangeably with carousel brainstorming. The two techniques are almost identical in the procedure except for one slight difference. Using the graffiti technique, the students themselves move from one station to another. They need to have enough space so that everyone can easily move around. The carousel strategy keeps the students seated while they pass the charts from group to another. Depending on the class dynamics and the nature of the task, teachers are in better position to decide what works better for grouping students. In the case of mixed abilities class, it's a good idea to experiment with mixing up the strong and weak students ensuring that the more capable, skilled and knowledgeable person is available to help and

also giving opportunities for more capable students to work together so that they work to their full potential.

Procedure

- Generate a number of questions for the topic of the writing task
- Write each question on a separate piece of poster board or chart paper
- Divide the class into groups. Every member is assigned a role (recorder, reporter, facilitator, etc.)
- Direct each group to stand in front of question station for a specified time to brainstorm their ideas using a different color (for tracking each group)
- When time is called, groups will rotate to the next station in clockwise order Group A will rotate to station 2 to discuss, brainstorm and share idea about question 2 group B   to station 3 for the main purpose etc. This goes on until all groups have been at each station
- When each group reaches their last station, they have to select the top three ideas to share with the entire class
- Wrap up the session. Discuss the topic with the whole class by having the reporter from each group summarize the group's ideas to the whole class.

It is the same procedure with graffiti except that the students keep their seats while the posters move from one group to another.

What might hinder?

A class in which most students are low level with schemata deficiency might have difficulties generating ideas.

What might help?

Learners can provide scaffolding for each other when engaged in this activity and converse with each other. It offers struggling writers a chance to work with more able peers, giving them the opportunity to compare insights. In the case where most students have insufficient schemata, it would be better to prepare an activity that helps them build background knowledge**.**

Graffiti Brainstorming
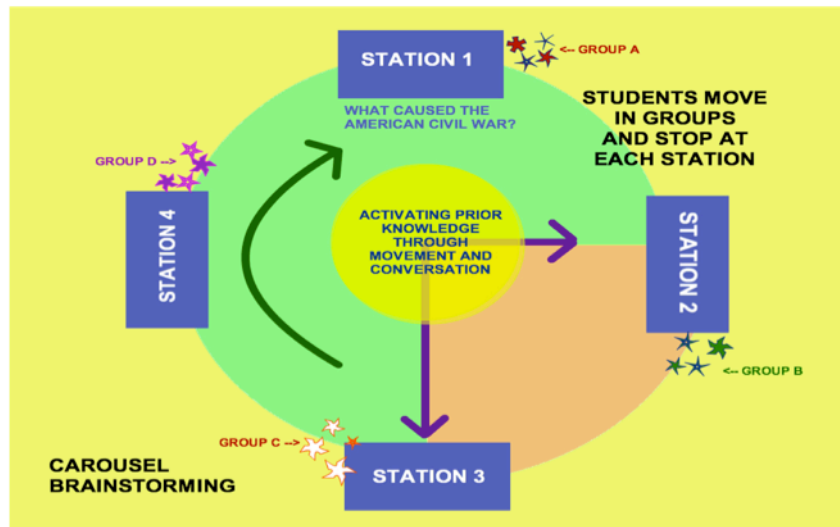
Figure 8.7: Graffiti Brainstorming

Application

In the following writing lesson that I have planned for my ESL students at UCAELI (intensive English center) University of Connecticut during my internship, I will show how to use graffiti-brainstorming technique to activate students' prior knowledge about stress, its causes, effects and how to cope with it. In addition to the background information about the topic, the activity aims at activating or providing information about genre text format, conventions and language required for the topic. The writing task is a cause-effect essay, which is one type of pattern used with expository discourse. It is concerned with why this thing happens (causes) and what it leads to (effects), providing enough background information about the topic, genre text format, audience, conventions and language required for the topic.

Writing Task

Write *an expository article* for your college newspaper or your school website, analyzing the causes, effects of stress on students and suggesting ways to cope with it.

Writing activity

Pre-writing stage

Teacher's Activities	Students' activities

• Shows a picture that represent a stressed person
    What's going on with that person?
Alternative
• Shows a video
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nic2xahl9Ag 3mn
• Asks the students to identify the problem
• Write the word "stress" on the board
• Word association technique / clustering free association
• What does this word bring to your mind?
	Observe and identify the problem
	
	Stress
	
	Brainstorm any idea related to the word stress
	
	Stressed, stressful, overwhelmed, overburned
	Angry, frustrated -a lot of coffee-nervous-assignments and due date etc….
	
	New expressions can be introduced:
	
	Get on his/her nerves-flare up
	Keep cool-coping etc

Writing stage

Teacher's activities	Students' activities
• Arrange students into groups. • Write each question on a separate piece of poster. • Each group discusses and jot down ideas related to the question. (See activity procedure). Heading one Situation that makes me stressed/overwhelmed/ frustrated Heading two **Stress makes me feel**… What happen to my mind and body? Heading three **Situation that makes me feel relaxed/happy** • Facilitate gives assistance whenever required. • Ask students to share their brainstormed ideas with the rest of the group members	• Students split into three groups (It depends on the size of the class) • Group one discusses and jots down ideas related to heading one • Might come up with ideas such as: Exams, Homework deadlines, Peer pressure, hard to keep appointments, daily upset, etc. • Might come up with the following: **Make me feel like** **Sad, lonely, irritated** **Screaming/ crying/nervous…** **Insomnia/Eating disorders** **Headaches /migraines** **Heavy drinking etc.** • Might come up with ideas such as: **Exercise,** **Practicing yoga,** **Get organized, etc** • Discuss and jot down their ideas
• Arrange students into groups. • Write each question on a separate piece of poster. • Each group discusses and jot down	• Students split into three groups (It depends on the size of the class) • Group one discusses and jots down

• Encourage students to add ideas on each other posters, peer-edit. • Ask students to choose at least three points from each poster acbout causes/consequences and suggesting solutions • Encourage students to make further research and add facts and statistics to make their writing more powerful	• Asks for clarifications and add suggestions • Gives feedback and get feedback
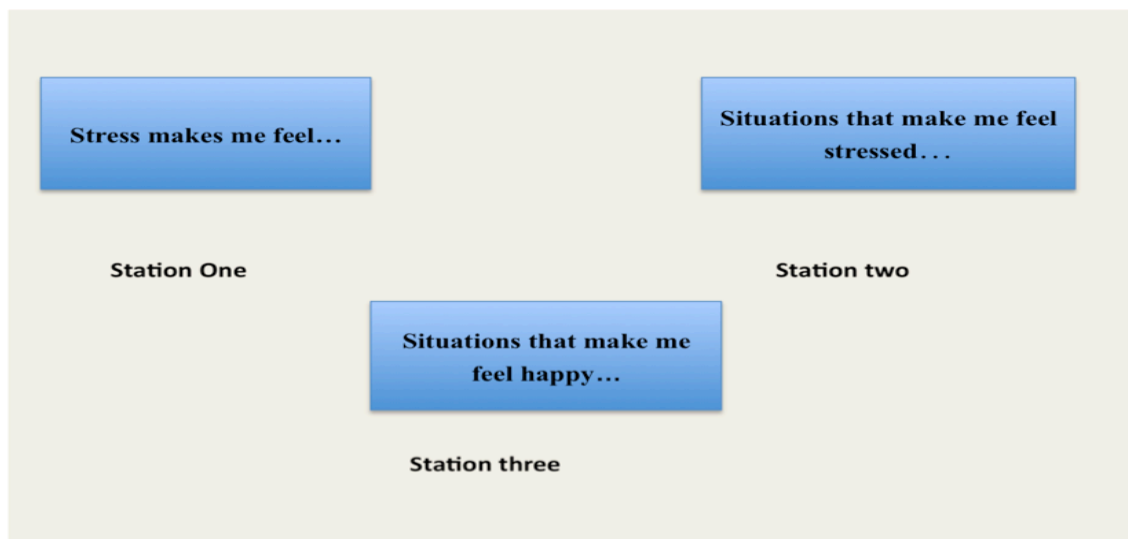
Figure 8.8: Sample Room Layout for Carousel Brainstorming

Next class: Opportunity for systematic drafting

     a) Peer editing: Students read their articles, give and receive feedback.

        about organization, content, grammar, word choice, coherence etc.

b) Instructor feedback.

c) Students correct and review their articles before they submit them.

8.3 Dealing with Schemata Deficiencies: Scheming Ways, Applications and Implications

Writing is a cognitively complex skill that involves many elements. Besides the linguistic knowledge (The knowledge of grammar, mechanics, syntax etc), the background knowledge on the topic (content schemata) and knowledge about how discourse is organized with respect to different genre (Format schemata) are pre-requisite elements before engaging in writing. Deficiencies in one of these required elements will certainly be a serious hindrance to writing. After long experience teaching EFL students, I have come to conclude that writing deficiency in Algerian EFL classes is mostly related to schemata deficiencies (linguistic, content and formal). We have been trapped, as teachers, by the idea that writing effectively implies learning grammar and equipping the students with linguistic tools sufficiently. However, my every day teaching-based findings showed that being linguistically competent doesn't imply writing effectively. As many students who excel in tasks that deal with grammar, vocabulary, and even reading comprehension skills are not automatically good writers. Added to that, my academic experience as a writer in English speakers context has deeply impacted my life both as teacher of writing to EFL students and also as an academic writer. This accumulative history with writing arose my awareness that writing is more than linguistic competence. It is, in fact, an amalgam of different interwoven "knowledge(s)" that interplay producing a piece of clear, fluent and effective writing. Boosting students' abilities to write is not a short-term plan. "The students can't acquire everything they need to improve their writing skills at once"(Hyland, 2003, p. 53). Rather, it is a long- term project that starts with the first literacy years of the child because it is a demanding and laborious skill that calls for many abilities including:

1- capabilities in generating ideas about a given topic (This requires knowledge of the world);

2- capabilities in articulating the ideas accurately and fluently (This requires linguistic

knowledge);

3- capabilities in hanging these ideas in their appropriate rhetorical patterns and rhetorical conventions of written texts; (Genre knowledge);

4- capabilities in communicating the ideas appropriately so as to avoid the trap of misunderstanding (cross-cultural knowledge).

In other words, writing requires linguistic, content, formal and cultural schemata. However, many Algerian EFL students come to writing class or more precisely to EFL class, as writing is not taught as an independent course but as an integrated skill, without enough schemata. A deficiency in one of the prerequisite prior knowledge will certainly impede the students' abilities and reduce their chance to write effectively and increase the teacher preparation for ways to build schemata. Kelly Gallagher observed that the lack of background knowledge remains the main factor that hinders his ninth grade students to comprehend the reading passage.

> When Kelly Gallagher learned that his ninth grade students could not name the vice president of the United States, and when two seniors asked him in all seriousness, "Who is this guy, Al Qaeda?" Kelly was shocked into realizing he needed to do something outside the standard curriculum to build his students' background knowledge. In response, he developed the Article of the Week activity to address the serious gaps in his students' education.
>
> "Article of the Week" for prior knowledge deficiency
> Retrieved from: http://educationquicktakes.blogspot.com/2011/02/article-of-week-for-prior-knowledge.html

8.3.1 The Article of the Week Strategy

Application

> To help build my students' prior knowledge, I assign them an "Article of the Week" every Monday morning. By the end of the school year I want them to have read 35 to 40 articles about what is going on in the world. It is not enough to simply teach my students to recognize theme in a given novel; if my students are to become

literate, they must broaden their reading experiences into real-world text.

<div align="center">
Kelly Gallagher   Building Deeper Readers and Writers

http://www.kellygallagher.org/resources/articles.html
</div>

The instructor implemented a powerful strategy to help his students build up absent schemata. Every week, he assigns them to read an article. The articles, treating various topics, are selected mainly from different newspapers such us the Washington Post The Week, The New York Times, Newsweek. Students highlight passages and words that cause confusion. They consider the author's purpose and intended audience. They, then, write a reflective paper.

Implication

The article of the week strategy provides different kind of schemata. Being exposed to different themes, the students will get informed about the world (world knowledge). They will build a large repertoire of different phrases, idioms and vocabulary with its connotative and denotative meaning, as they are context-situated. They will also develop organizational patterns of different texts. The assignment is not limited only to reading, but it is followed by a series of writing tasks. Through the Article of the Week strategy, Gallagher's students gain enough input that will be used as frame of reference in their future reading or writing.

8.3.2 Read-To-Me strategy

As I have mentioned, 3AS EFL students come to the class with very little input and serious schemata deficiencies meanwhile they are expected to develop writing competency in different types of discourse (descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository or injunctive). Regarding the student's low level of performance, the expectation is too challenging. Helping these struggling learners develop writing skills within a short period of time, as they are allotted no more than 3/4 hours a week, seems unrealistic.   Developing writing competency, as well researched and documented, is a long-term plan that requires many elements in particular *time and practice*. But aside from the mandatory reading that are followed with comprehension questions, these students rarely read for pleasure. In

addition, the learning context is not helping and encouraging to reading for pleasure, as the students are busy and overloaded with assignments in different content area (e.g., mathematics, Arabic language, geography and history). Further to this, the students are not motivated for any voluntary pleasure reading. The situation is hyper challenging but it doesn't make the case hopeless, as it is never late to mend. I have realized that I need to do something outside the standard curriculum to meet my students' urgent needs; building absent schemata. In so doing, I have implemented Read-To-Me strategy. I give my students short stories to read every two weeks. I myself select graded reading materials; taking into account my students' need analysis (e.g., language proficiency levels, interests, and aspiration). I have chosen short stories because they are real-life based material, linguistically, and culturally rich. They provide the reader with people's views, beliefs, attitudes and experiences. Equally important to note, they engage the reader's attention as he/she totally get involved in the plot and excited to find out how the conflict will be resolved.

If selected and exploited appropriately, short stories are really very powerful means to develop different schemata and enhance students' abilities to read and write. After modeling (see chapter nine) how to write a story report, the students, working cooperatively, write the report including the five elements of the story namely the setting, the characters, the conflict, the plot, the theme and sub themes. The final product will be a poster with a picture or drawing that projects and illustrates the plot. Each group members, then, present their work; discuss the plot, the characters and the theme. The other students are encouraged to ask for clarification, and share their thoughts (see a sample of students' presentation in the DVD). After that, the students, individually, exchange and select a story from the ones presented and develop a story review. The story review will include a summary, description of one of the character (physical and moral traits), part of the story he/she liked, and the one he/she didn't like (if applicable). The assignment can be extended to include making connection strategy. In other words, the students are encouraged to make connections. The connection can be made between:

The story being read and another story that was previously read or heard of (text-to-text) (see Figure 8.9).

The story being read and the student personal experience (text-to- self)

The story being read and something that happens in the world (text-to-world)

Making connection activity raises the students' awareness about the importance of relating what they know to what they are reading, discussing or writing. The students will, unconsciously, refer to their prior knowledge whenever they are engaged in reading or writing.

My Personal Connection: *Text-to-self* What does this text remind me of?	
Characters, events, places, attitudes …	This reminds me ……
"He was like an oak tree, he was very tall and strong"	I picture my uncle; we all call him "Palm tree".

Figure 8.9: Text-to-Self Connection

8.3.3 Literature Circles:(Short & Kauffman, Daniels et al.)

Many famous writers emerged from this old tradition of gathering and talking about books. Recently, there is a high interest in bringing literature circle into class. Students read a piece of literature and then, gather to discuss "events and characters in the book, the author's craft, or personal experiences related to the story"(Noe, 2004, para2). They share their thoughts and favorite part in the story. And also scaffold each other's understanding of any part that caused confusion. Every member assumes a role between a questioner, summarizer, connector, illustrator, vocabulary enricher, figurative language finder, investigator and literary luminary etc. And Even though, it is student-centered strategy, the teacher plays a paramount role in structuring the task supporting up the students whenever requested. At the end of the discussion, the students switch roles and decide what part, section or question in the story they will expand and discuss for next meeting. . This gives the students the opportunity for further comprehension and reflection.

Implications

Read-to-Me and Literary Circle strategies draw upon the principles of the sociocultural theory. They play a crucial *mediating function* as they depend to some extent, on the initiative of learners (van Lier, 2008). They are based on social interaction and engagement with each other. The students facilitate, answer each other's wonders, elucidate blank stares and regulate each other's learning. Through the dialogue, the open discussion, the students get insight, shape their thought and build new information that they might need in the future. The two strategies combine the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) besides interpersonal skills. Using these techniques can help the learners to develop and/or build new schemata, which are:

Formal schemata: students will develop knowledge about the organizational patterns and rhetorical conventions of the literary text (short story, poem, play etc). It is much more beneficial if the tasks are accompanied by graphic organizers writing frames. This schema (Language, organization, vocabulary) will be available to help and ready to respond whenever the learner is reading or writing similar genre. As the Literary Circle strategy is based on the idea of re-reading and exploring the literary piece in depth, it will certainly give the students an opportunity to discover the language, develop other reading strategies (e.g., inferring, predicting), and expand a wide range of lexicon.

Content Schemata: As any literary text includes much information such as the geography, culture, historical facts, students will get the opportunity to broaden their minds. When I was in New Orleans, for a conference, I was interested in exploring the place and also the food. I was too much confused when someone recommended trying " Po-Boy". It was almost five months later that my confusion got elucidated when coming across an article about the delicious bread sandwich with seafood. Thanks to the incidental reading, I discovered that Po-Boy is a type of bread sandwich. Instructors can use their own approach and savoir-faire to adapt or adjust the strategies above. For instance, instead of talking about literature, the reading topics can be extended and diversified to include, for instance, scientific themes (talking about global warming, inventions, etc), thus, discovering other conventions of writing.

Flower and Hayes pointed out that a well-read person has a large amount of tacit

knowledge of conventions, "a richer set of images of what a text can look like", and more option that can be offered to express his/her ideas (as quoted in Krashen, 1991, p. 20). In nutshell, whatever strategy implemented in the class either The Article of the Week strategy, Read-to-Me strategy, literature circles or others, reading remains a very powerful resource to build not only content schemata but formal schemata as well.

8.3.4 Field trips

They are trips that are "arranged by the school and undertaken for educational purposes, in which the students go to places where the materials of instruction may be observed and studied directly in their functional setting" (Krepel & Duvall in Michie, 1998). A field trip, as an interactional learning activity, provides hands-on, and authentic learning experience since the students get exposed to real life (real people, real events and real places). It also provides " natural" learning condition where the students experience and construct their own meaning far from any constraints. This stimulates the learners' questions, and ideas and increases their understanding and retention. If they are well prepared, field trips can be an everlasting learning experience and a very good way to build schemata.

Application

As my lesson was about the symbolisms of the Statue of Liberty, I decided to assess my students' knowledge in terms of the American symbols and in particular the Statue of Liberty before exploring the different symbols that the statue embraces. I gave KWL chart (what I Know, what I Want to learn, and I learnt), as in Figure 8.9, to my ESL beginner students and ask them to write any information related to the statue. Aside from " big statue" " New York", the students had very little information regarding, for instance, why, and when it was constructed. I planned to do a virtual field trip, as it was not possible to do a real one. It was through this virtual field trip that some misconceptions have been elucidated (e.g., it was built in US as a complete piece but not as separate parts) and they also learnt some historical fact and prerequisite information (e.g., It was a gift from France to US to celebrate the two nations' commitment to the principles of liberty, shipped from France to New York, she came in 350 pieces.) Without enough background knowledge

about US history, expression such as " Mother of Exiles" as the Statue of Liberty main symbol would be, I expected, a little bit confusing and challenging to the students.   So to help my ESL students build schemata required to understand the concept and the Lazarus' poem "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," I used the Ken Burn video on PBS. This was a very effective tool not only for schemata building but it was very engaging as well. Besides the strategies mentioned above, Carrell (1988) has suggested discussion, role-play, text previewing, and real life experiences (as documented in Stott, 2001).

What I know	What I want to know	What I have Learnt
1- It is a huge monument in New York	1-How height is it? 2-Why is it a woman and not a man?	1-It is 305 ft including the base. 2- Represents the Roman Goddess of Freedom

Figure 8.10: KWL Chart, The Statue of liberty

Summary

Considerable amount of research has been carried out on the role of background knowledge or schema in SLA. Schema theory postulates that our understanding, interpretation and processing of information depend on the preexisting knowledge which is gained through our experience, stored in our minds to long term memory, and recalled whenever required. Different types of schemata have been identified so far. While Content schema is related to the familiarity of the topic, formal schema refer to the background knowledge in terms of the organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written text

generally referred to as genre knowledge. Schematic knowledge has been documented and acknowledged to have a crucial role in SLA. Students with sufficient schematic capital in respect to linguistic, content and genre knowledge can process the new information effortlessly and can go further in their learning. On the other hand, those with little prior knowledge can hardly deal with the new information. This is proved to be true by many classroom practitioners. My every day teaching based findings showed that writing deficiency in Algerian EFL classes is mostly related to schemata deficiencies (linguistic, content and formal). Mending the problem with extensive grammatical practice isn't the ideal remedy to address the students' writing deficiency. Teachers should be aware that their students' background knowledge activation is, first and foremost, the most important step that should be taken into account in any lesson plan. Researchers have provided us with many strategies that can be used to retrieve our students' schemata. Even though little has been done in respect to writing, as most of these researches were primarily devoted to reading comprehension, insights can be adapted to suit writing skill. The strategies that have been presented in this chapter are just a warm up and activation for teachers' creativity. In fact, teachers are in better position to create the most effective and appropriate strategy to bring their student prior knowledge into action.

I would like to wrap up this chapter with the following diagram (see Figure 8.10). The diagram shows a causal link between background knowledge and learning. As our understanding and processing of the information depend on the background knowledge that we have gained through our experience, EFL/ESL teachers should take this important component into consideration. If teachers capitalize on students' world knowledge and experiences, students will have something to say. This instills their motivation and retention as their experience, knowledge and ideas are valued and appreciated. Under this learning atmosphere, they become interested to go further and have the necessary assets to achieve their optimal learning.
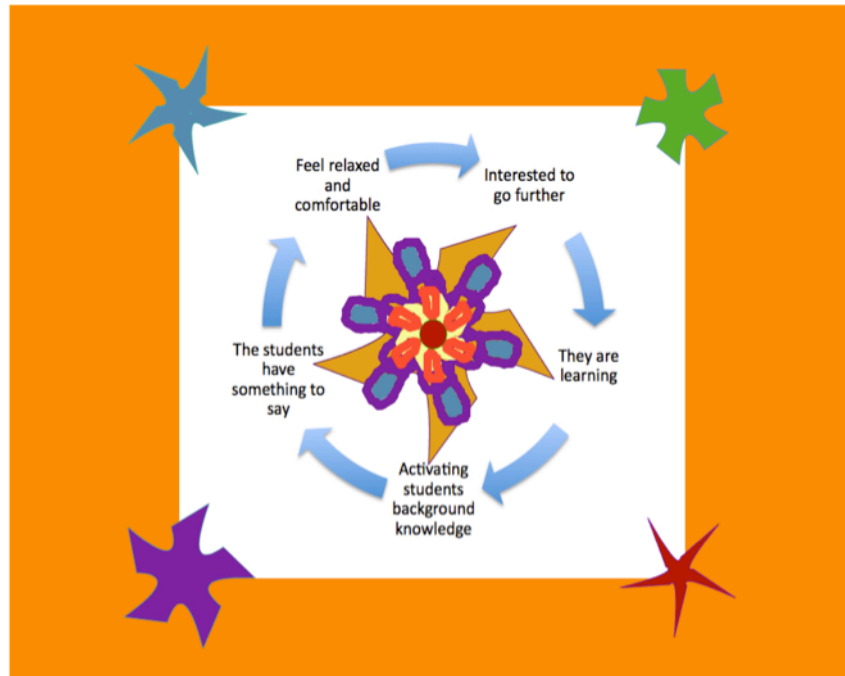
Figure 8.11: A Causal Link Between Background Knowledge and Learning

CHAPTER NINE

MODELING STRATEGY

Introduction

Learning a foreign language, whether to speak it or use it in writing, is a complex process that entails many elements. Learners need to be mentally disposed for that, motivated and totally engaged. In addition to these internal factors, they should be immersed in a learning environment where they are exposed to that target language quantitatively sufficient and qualitatively comprehensible. Nevertheless, learning to write using L2 is more demanding and laborious than learning to speak it. As discussed in the previous chapters, the process of writing is a complex skill that calls for many abilities and skills. Like all the skills discussed so far (e.g., language use skills, mechanical skills, stylistic skills), putting ideas in their appropriate rhetorical patterns and rhetorical conventions is a crucial skill in producing different kinds of writing. However, while third year Algerian EFL students in secondary schools are assigned writing tasks and expected to produce in accordance with the rhetorical patterns and conventions, they have no explicit instruction of how to handle the task. It is duly acknowledged, "writing has to be preceded and accompanied by *wide exposure* to appropriate models of written language" (Byrne, 86, p. 30). Language exposure, in this sense, shouldn't be thought of as providing the learners with enough written language yet in " mute mode." By that I mean, presenting a text without explaining or *showing* how this text has been produced and then leaving them staring at this block of language. On the contrary, learning the writing skill is, to some extent, like learning the driving, sewing or cooking skill. The "show me how to do that" is paramount. Learners need to know, for instance how to select essential ideas, making the right decision about their combination and arrangement. They should also know how to hang their ideas in *their* appropriate format and how to cope with difficulties. For that reason, before asking students to write in a particular genre, narratives, a business letter, an application letter, a report, or any other kind of genres, they need to be provided with examples or models of that particular genre. Teachers need to expose their learners to different writing models giving them ample opportunities to identify and develop

awareness that every genre has particular characteristics that distinguish it from other. This is done while taking into account the importance of modeling the writing processes that are carried out in producing these models.

9.1 Genres, or Text Type?

It is worth noting that the term "genre" and "text type" have been conflated and used interchangeably in pedagogic application. To elucidate this confusion, I would like to invite you to refer to Paltridge's article "Genre, Text Type, and the Language Learning Classroom" in which he makes an exhaustive analysis about genre and text type. Byber (1988), pointed out that if genre groups texts on the basis of external factors, text type categorizes texts on the basis of internal factors (as quoted in Paltridge, 1996). In other words, external factors describe activities "which regularly occur in society" (Dudley-Evans, in Paltridge) such as sermons, poems, folk tales, songs etc. To widen our knowledge of other kinds of genre, we can refer to Brown's (2007), non-exhaustive list of genre, as indicated in table 9.1. On the other hand, internal factors describe texts in terms of linguistic form, irrespective of genre. Procedure, description, compare and contrast are examples of text types. Byber also mentioned that similar genres can differ totally in their linguistic patterns as different genres can be completely the same linguistically. For instance, recipes and manuals are different genres but both are classified as procedural regarding the type of text.   Even though genre is addressed in Algerian course book through the writing assignments (e.g., a review article, a review book, a holiday advert, a newspaper article, a policy statement), the term text type or type of discourse is frequently used in the Algerian syllabus. This is clearly stated when describing the students' exit profile after completion of the school year: the learners should be able to produce a written message in different types of discourse (*descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository, injunctive)*. Nevertheless, I will refer to both terms but taking into consideration the distinction that has already been made.

1-non fiction: reports, editorials, essays, articles, reference (dictionaries, etc.)
2-fiction: novels, shot stories, jokes, drama, poetry
3-letters: personal, business
4-greeting cards
5-diaries, journals
6-memos (e.g., interoffice memo)
7-messages (e.g., phone messages)
8-announcements
9-newspaper "journalese"
10-academic writing
11-questionnaire
12-forms, applications
13-questionnairs
14-directions
15-labels
16-signs
17-recipes
18-bills (and other financial statements)
19-maps
20-manuals
21-menus
22-schedules
23-advertisements: commercial, personal
24-invitations
25-directories (e.g., telephone, yellow pages)
26-comic strips, cartoons

(Source: Brown, 2007, pp. 362-363)

Table 9.1: Types of genres

9.2 Genre Characteristics

Hyland (2003) defines genre as " socially recognized ways of using language for particular purposes"(p. 18). Drawing upon this definition, we can conclude that:

a) *Genres are goal-oriented:* every genre has a specific purpose. For instance, if a fairly tale is intended to entertain and educate the reader, a holiday advertisement's main purpose is to persuade the customer to buy a product.

b) *Genre has a specific organizational pattern:* If a recipe or manual follows a process order pattern in which a sequence of actions is described, a biography follows a certain chronological pattern order, in which a sequence of events occur in time. As mentioned before, in some cases, different genres can have the same organizational pattern. Even though a recipe is different from a manual, they both share the same

organizational pattern called the procedural pattern.

c) *Genre has specific linguistic features:* While fairy tales are likely to use the past tense, the opening and closing formula "once upon a time" and "lived happily ever after," the use of rhetoric devices like repetitions, metaphors, recipes are likely to use the imperative, sequencers, and action verbs and rarely use metaphors. On the other hand, different genres can share the same linguistic features and signal words (e.g., the use of sequencers in recipe and manual).

d) *Genre follows certain social conventions:* Every language carries the values and norms of its speakers. Genre is systematically related to the context of the social community. Writing appropriately is seen to involve the social and cultural dimensions of the community. Thus, knowing about the social conventions is a pre requisite for effective and appropriate writing. Otherwise, deviation from the norms is likely to happen. Wray (2004) gave us a good example about this convention deviation. The following is a request letter he got from a speaker of other culture.

> I am immensely delightful and profoundly honoured to send you this letter. Please accept my deepest esteem, my warmest, kindest regards, and sincerest wishes of constant happiness, good health, and ever –increasing prosperity and success in all your endevours. (p. 54)

As Wray pointed out, the language is not appropriately used. For the Anglo-Saxon culture speaker, the language sounds highly embellished and ornate and might be seen as impolite and abrupt. So what is acceptable in one language is not in another. "There is a decidedly "English" way of handling a topic." Otherwise, "the result can be a very un-English text"(Raimes, 1983, pp. 115-116)

9.3 What is modeling?

Hogan & Pressley, define modeling as a "teaching behavior that shows how one should feel, think or act within a given situation" (in Lange 2002, para. 5). Modeling is, thus, showing by bringing to the surface the inner speech, the complex thinking process that underlies any cognitively demanding task to help the learners understand, recognize and internalize the thinking strategies used to approach trouble spots. Based on the premise

that *Language plays a pivotal role in mental development*, modeling for students is a cornerstone of scaffolding. Modeling can take three forms (see Chapter Six):

a) Verbalization of thought. Plainly put, telling and showing what's going in the mind for example, telling how to draw inferences from a text.

b) Verbalization of thought while demonstrating the task (telling and showing). For instance, showing to students how to arrange, expand ideas, how to use link words etc.

c) Demonstrating the task without involving verbalization of thought for example performing an act in a text.

9.4 Analyzing a Text, and Identifying its Features

As mentioned above, teachers need to provide their learners with writing models giving them ample opportunities to identify and develop awareness that every genre has particular features that make it distinguishable from other genres. For instance, the teacher would like to teach instructional texts. An instructional text is a non-fiction text that describes how something is done using a series of sequenced instructions. Examples are recipes, rules for games or giving warnings. To make the students aware of its conventions, the teacher might use a model text, a recipe for making pizza as shown in table 9.2. Then, using specific questions, the teacher helps the students discuss the different aspects of a recipe, explore and identify the features, layout (title, ingredients and preparation), content and the linguistic features of the text (the use of the imperative, sequencers, action verbs etc.). Besides, teachers can help students develop *writing guides* including the most important features that have been identified. These writing guides, either displayed on a chart or duplicated, serve as *a reminder*, an aide-memoire when students come to write their own recipes (Wray, 2004, p. 59). An instance of how writing guides can help students structure their instructional texts is presented in table 9.3. Another example of a writing guide for narrative genre (a fairy tale) is shown in table 9.4. (See Wray for more details). Teachers should, first of all, draw students' attention that the text presented is not to be viewed as the ideal one. Instead, it is just an example, a resource and one of many others that might have been used to identify the formal features (e.g., verb tenses, pronouns use), the dominant rhetorical patterns (e.g.,

descriptive, narrative, argumentative) and the communicative functions (to report, to describe, to convince and so forth) presented in a particular genre. Otherwise, students would fall in the trap of imitation that inhibit and prevent them from developing their own voices and creative composition skills (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005, p. 142).

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- DOUGH
- 1 package active dry yeast (about 2 teaspoons)
- 1 cup warm water
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- pinch salt
- Topping:
- 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
- browned ground beef or Italian sausage, broken up
- 1 can sliced mushrooms, drained
- thinly sliced green pepper and onions, optional
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Preparation:

First, Add yeast to the water and stir until dissolved.   Then, add sugar, oil, flour, and salt. Set mixing bowl filled with dough in warm water for 5 minutes to rise. Pat dough out on a well-greased pizza pan or cookie sheet. After that, Layer toppings on dough in order listed. Bake at 400° for 15 to 20 minutes.

Adapted from http://southernfood.about.com/od/pizzarecipes/r/bl30412c.htm

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Table 9.2: Pizza recipe

What will your instructional writing be about?	How to do something, pizza recipe
What will be the aim of your writing?	Instruct, to tell about its different ingredients and how to prepare it
Who is the audience?	Anyone making the dish, the cook
What layout will you use?	Title, time, ingredients, the procedure,
What kind of tense will you mostly use?	Imperative, do this...
Are you going to use active or passive Verbs?	Mostly active, action verbs

Table 9.3. A Writing Guide for Instructional Text (Pizza Recipe)

9.5 Demonstrating writing task

Analyzing a text, and identifying its features in terms of the organizational pattern, the purpose and linguistic features can contribute significantly to the learners' understanding of the genre. However, analysis of texts is not sufficient to help students improve their writing skill (Byrne, p. 14). Besides identifying the genre's features, the learners need to "be made aware of *how we communicate* through the written medium"(Byrne, p. 30, my italics). They need to see not only the thinking processes included in any kind of genre writing but should also be given enough opportunities to practice the skill. Researchers have suggested many approaches that integrate and demonstrate *explicitly* how the writing processes are carried out. To list but a few, genre approach, writing apprenticeship approach, shared writing or other models. All of them draw on the work of Vygotsky and his principle of ZPD, the area between what learners can do independently and what they can do with assistance.

Genre Characteristics		Illustration
What is a modern *fairy tale?*	A *fictional* piece of work that may have similarities with *reality*	The Unicorn in the Garden
What is *the purpose* of a fairy tale?	1-Entertain and bring humor 2-Educate and illustrate a moral lesson	1-If you sow the wind, you will certainly reap the whirlwind 2-Don't count your chickens until they are hatched.
Who is the audience?	1-Generally children 2-Adults	Suits all ages
What layout will you use?	1- Special beginning 2- Special ending 3- Some dialogs 4- beginning, climax and ending	1-Once upon a time… 2-The husband lived happily ever after. 3-"Did you tell your wife you saw a unicorn?" asked the police. "Of course not," replied the husband
What are the main features?	1-Good characters versus bad characters 2- Triumph of good over evil 3-- Talking animals, objects, fairy beasts as characters 4- Universal truth/experiences	1-Husband versus the wife 2-the story is full of symbols, different interpretation is possible 3-The unicorn as a character but the author ignores the *talking* animals' convention 4-the conflict between couple
What are the linguistic features?	1-Past narrative as the predominant tense 2-Rhetorical devices	1-Looked- ate-was-as soon as …had gone…got up 2-They had a hard time *subduing* her…but they finally *subdued* her (repetition) "as crazy as a jaybird" (simile)

Table 9.4: A Writing Guide for Narrative Text (Short Story)

The Writing Apprenticeship Approach

The writing apprenticeship approach relies on elements of cognitive apprenticeship. The cognitive apprenticeship theory is based on the principle that learning correlates to the observation of role models. While they are teaching novices, the models are required to articulate their thinking processes, making the tacit and invisible processes involved in carrying out a complex task explicit and observable. Bringing these internal processes up to the surface into the open helps students build cognitive and metacognitive skills through watching what others do and how they solve problems (Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989; Collins, 1991). It is worth emphasizing that these cognitive and metacognitive strategies are the core principles of expertise mainly in domains such as reading, writing and mathematics (Collins et al., 1987). Departing from that, it has been suggested that these thinking processes and reasoning skills integrated in mathematics, reading, and writing can be taught explicitly while adapting the methods that have been used in traditional apprenticeship to teach complex physical skills (Collins et al.) This apprenticeship method to writing involves *observation, coaching or scaffolding and fading*. First, The novice observes the expert showing how the skill is handled. Then, under the expert's coaching and assistance, he/she executes the skill. Modeling, in this sense, is not a passive, mindless imitation expected on the part of the learner (Lantolf & Thorne). Rather, "it is intentional and self-selective behavior on the child's behavior" (Tomasello, in Lantolf and Thorne, p. 204). The support provided can take the form of different scaffolds, reminders, prompts or any other tools and signs required to approximate the targeted skill. Once the novice internalizes the skills necessary to perform the task smoothly and with proficiency, expert assistance is abbreviated to be limited to hints and refinements. As the novice becomes able to handle the task independently, the support fades and no more is needed.

Application

Going back to my schooling years as a student or reflecting on my daily practices as a teacher and observing other teachers practices, I would say, to my knowledge, that instructors who have been integrating this method have been successfully helping their students in the learning process. When I was in the elementary school, I had enormous difficulties in understanding mathematics. Every thing looked abstract and difficult to

assimilate and thus to internalize. My ability to solve any mathematical problem was only a mere imitation of a set of samples presented by the teacher without enough explicit explanation about the strategies involved in problem solving. Once out of the box, I became stuck and could hardly solve the new emerged problem. To improve my skills and my scores, I decided to take extra courses besides the mandatory ones. The instructor was recently retired French teacher but also known in the school to be a skillful math teacher whose students got the best marks in math. Attending my second instructor's classes improved my mathematics skills to a large extent. I could feel and reach the internal processes and strategies that had been for a long time inaccessible. He modeled the task giving concrete and ample of examples from real life situations using different tools as mediators. He gave enough explanation of what is being learned (content), when and why it is used (the rational behind its use), and how it is used (the way it is handled), (Lange, 2002). Then, he would ask for any volunteer (another role model) ready to execute the task. On the one hand, this allowed the instructor to check our understanding, and to elucidate any unclear thought using questions. On the other hand, it was an opportunity for us to ask questions, regulate and internalize the cognitive processes that had been thought aloud. After some practice, he would reduce his participation as we became more skilled. In short, our teacher, probably without having any theoretical knowledge, was using intuitively the so-called the "Cognitive Apprenticeship Approach." Our instructor's method was far from being a ready-made formula or a recipe that we were expected to follow slavishly. Instead, he taught us how to think critically and use our cognitive capacities strategically to solve any encountered problem.

9.5.2 Models of scaffolded writing instruction

Helping struggling writers improve their writing skills requires a set of stages that can take the following sequence:

a) Modeled writing   *c) Interactive writing*

b) Shared writing   *d) Guided writing*

e) Independent writing

Teachers can go through all the stages or just use some of them. It all depends on students' needs and the amount of support they require. The higher support the students need, the more direction the teacher needs to give. Some of these stages are, as you can see, integrated in the aforementioned "writing apprenticeship approach."

a) Modeled writing: It is the most guided approach under which the teacher is, in front of the class, doing all the writing. During this process, the teacher *"talks aloud,"* gives enough explanation about what is being learned, when and why it is used, and how it is used. "The ordinarily covert thoughts guiding the action of the models are thus made observable and learnable by other" (Bandura, 1989, p. 25). On the other hand, the students observe and see how their instructor solves the problems, for instance, in terms of selecting and organizing ideas, removing the irrelevant ones, linking the ideas using appropriate link words, using cohesive markers, doing proof reading and so forth. Modeled writing provides the students with an opportunity to experience all the processes of writing, access the thinking world of the expert (the teacher) and, therefore, fosters their cognitive skills. As modeled writing serves as prompts and *learning facilitator* (Bandura), it helps reduce the students' tension and increases their motivation. However, modeled writing needs a good preparation on the part of teachers taking into account the students interests, needs, and learning styles. This will help the students to be focused and motivated. Modeled writing is said to be effective only if the student's attention, one amongst the prerequisite factors that facilitate learning and retention, is kept to a maximum (Bandura).

b) Shared writing: During this stage, teachers as well as their learners contribute actively and cooperatively in the design of the product. The learners' role shifts from peripheral participation as observers to an active and high degree of participation as contributors. The teacher continues to serve as a scribe, and use the "talk-aloud" strategy.

c) Interactive writing: There is a gradual release of teachers' responsibility as the students become more involved in the process of writing. The teacher plays different roles between sharing the pen with his/her learners, modeling, checking, facilitating and monitoring the writing process. In such a collaborative atmosphere where both teacher and students work together in composing the text, many questions might emerge, and much input might be

offered in terms of writing conventions or other writing skills that can help in shaping and regulating the students' thinking.

d) Guided writing: It is the step between teacher-regulated and self-regulated writing. "Guided writing lessons occurs during the literacy block when the teacher determines that a group of students needs additional support to review or expand a writing skill" (Ontario Education, 2005). The teacher, then, works either with small groups who have similar needs or individuals to assist them in developing that particular writing skill. The role of the teacher in this model is to:

1.   assess students' writing;
2.   meet and assist small groups or individuals who need additional support in a specific writing skill;
3.   prompt, monitor, and guide individual students' writing skills;
4.   provide scaffolds such as writing frames, writing guides, graphic organizers; sentence starters, word-wall that substitute the instructor direct intervention;
5.   help students expand ideas in the process of composing;
6.   help students develop writing independence.

e) Independent writing: The teacher has already prepared the class for independent writing. Independent writing comes as a follow-up to a series of scaffolded writing stages involving some, but not necessary all, the writing models (modeled-shared-interactive-guided). The teacher's role is to:

1. monitor and intervene when necessary;
2. track students' progress and identify their achievement and needs using various assessment strategies (rubrics, self-assessment checklist etc);
3. prepare mini-lessons to address students' needs on a particular writing skill;

The students' role is to:

1. create their own piece of writing;
2. develop fluency;
3. ask for assistance when needed;
4. solve problems;

5. engage in peer-conferencing when required;

6. record their own progress using a self-assessment checklist.

To help students foster writing independence, teachers need a well-planned preparation. Writing, as we have seen so far, is a complex skill that requires enormous effort, time and practice. Teachers, therefore, should plan the necessary strategies to implement ahead of time, early in the school year. After assessing their students' needs, recording their strengths and weaknesses, teachers plan sequenced and scaffolded lesson plans. This is what van Lier (2007), referred to as pedagogical *scaffolding* at the *macro level* (from the most guided ones to the least directed) before releasing their students to write independently.

Application

Writing task: writing a summary

Students Level: Low intermediate

Model of writing instruction: *Interactive writing*

Skill: Summary

Sub-skills: a) Preserving essential information

c) Expressing ideas using different words

b) Reprocessing information

d) Developing cohesion and coherence

Even though summarizing is regarded as a skill rather than a form of writing, many forms of writing such abstracts of articles or dissertations, meeting minutes, synopses of books or movies and reports on speech are defined as *summaries* (Byrne, 1979, p. 79*)*. Summarizing is condensing a piece of written or spoken text to a shorter version, which requires linguistic skills (e.g., vocabulary, use of cohesive devices, link words, tenses) as well as high-level thinking (e.g., analyzing, synthesizing). As this skill requires an active reading or listening of the text, it provides the students with an opportunity to recognize the organizational patterns and the signal words accompanying them. Adding to that,

using one's words rather than the writer's, as an essential element in summarizing skill, compels us to look for options that language offers and, hence, enriches our vocabulary. Considering the various benefits that this skill offers, summarizing should be taught and frequently practiced in any class. Students need to follow certain steps to create a shortened version of a text. First, they need to understand the text and " get inside the material" and distinguish between essential information that should be preserved and the trivial that should be left out. They should also know how to synthesize and restate information using their own words.

In addition to the benefits mentioned so far, I have implemented this skill as my first writing lesson in my ESL class for mainly two reasons:

- Students will use it extensively in their listening and reading class.
- They will be requested to write summary plots for their assigned stories reading.

To help students enhance their summarizing skill, I need *to demonstrate* how this skill is handled. Using *interactive model* of writing, the students, as contributors and collaborators, actively participate in the production of the summary.

Procedure

After reading the story " The Unicorn in the Garden" using different strategies (skimming, scanning for details, and inferring), the students are supposed to have thoroughly comprehended the material. (See the lesson plan in appendix). The teacher, then, demonstrates the strategies involved in summarizing using interactive modeling. Without referring to the text, the students answer the teacher's questions, as shown in Table 9.5, which serve as a prompt and reminder for both events and language. For a more advanced level, the teacher can play the movie in silent mode as a reminder of the sequence of the events. Students are encouraged to share the pen with the teacher.

As you notice, the questions address both main information as well as trivial one. This is done intentionally. The teacher is thinking aloud making the students aware about two important strategies involved in summarizing: leaving out unimportant details or details that don't support the main ideas, and avoiding personal opinion.

Teacher: Let's see now, (involving students in the thinking process) what information do
we need to preserve and which one that should be left out. I don't need to
mention the kind of flowers that the unicorn has eaten. Leaving out this detail
will not hurt the sequence of the events as it doesn't support any main idea.
Teacher: Mmmmmm, this statement is not mentioned in the story.
"The husband wasn't honest because he was telling lies".
It represents a personal opinion. I should discard it. Otherwise, I will be
unfaithful to the story.

The teacher and the students work together to keep the main ideas and crucial supporting
details and discarding the unimportant ones. To create a unified piece of writing, the ideas
that have been kept as essential need to be connected using appropriate transitional words
and phrases. The teacher can provide the students with a list of signal words
(e.g., when, as soon as, while, immediately, after that, then, later, finally) that might be
useful in a sequenced pattern found in narrative (a story in this case). It is worth pointing
out that, in any lesson plan, teachers should anticipate what their student might not be able
to do. This helps them prepare and plan beforehand mini-lessons. In case the students need
further assistance, in terms of cohesion for instance, the teacher, then, has to provide a mini
lesson demonstration:

Teacher: Let me consider these two separated sentences:
a) The husband was having his breakfast. Action 1 in progress
b) The husband saw a unicorn. Action 2 interrupts action 1
The husband was having his breakfast. <u>During this time</u>, and <u>unexpectedly</u> a
unicorn appeared. (Teacher raises the voice to highlight the key words.)
.   Instead of having two separate ideas I can connect theme using a time conjunction
"when" to get one sentence. At the same, getting rid of the repetition
" husband". My sentence will look like that:
When the husband was having his breakfast, he saw a unicorn.

Teacher's Questions	Students expected answers
1-When did the story happen?	a) Once upon a shinning morning
2-What did the husband see?	b) The husband saw a unicorn.
3- By the time he saw the unicorn, what was he doing?	c) He was having his breakfast.
4- What does the unicorn have in the middle of his forehead?	d) He has a golden horn in the middle of his forehead.
5-Where did he see the unicorn?	e) He saw the unicorn in the garden.
6-Was the unicorn sleeping?	f) No, he was eating flowers.
7-What kind of flowers was he eating?	g) Tulips, roses, and lily.
8-What happened after that?	h) He went upstairs and roused his wife
9- Did she believe him?	i) No, she didn't
10- What did she say?	j) " The unicorn is a mythical beast," she said.
11-Was the unicorn still in the garden when the husband went downstairs?	k) Yes, was.
12- So, what did he do then?	l) He went upstairs and awoke his wife again.
13-Was she polite and friendly with him?	m) No, she wasn't polite and friendly
14- Justify. Do you remember what she said?	n) Crazy, booby…I will have you put in the booby-hatch/ mental institution
15- So, She threatened him. How was the husband? How did he react? What did he say?	o) He became furious/ angry/upset. p) We will see/ we will see about that …
16- What did the wife do as soon as the husband had gone out of the house	q) She dressed up, and then she called the police and the psychiatrist.
17-What happened when the police arrived?	r) They subjugated her/ got her into a straitjacket They asked the husband if he had seen the unicorn.
18- And did the husband respond positively?	s) He said that the unicorn is an unreal beast.
19-Was the husband sorry for what happened to his wife?	t) He wasn't. He lived a happy life later. He wasn't because he was telling lies to the police.
20-Do you think the husband is honest?	

Table 9.5: Questions as prompt

As discussed previously, secondary school EFL teachers, in the Algerian educational system, have barely enough instructional time to teach different kinds of writing (such as narrative, descriptive, argumentative, expository) that students are expected to master. To surmount this crunch time, teachers can explore the same text to teach different types of writing. In her chapter " Principles for Teaching Writing", Byrne (1978) claimed that the wider context of a text could offer teachers the possibilities to teach different kinds of writing such as descriptive, argumentative, expository and so forth. For instance, a letter may contain some narration, description, instruction etc. In the same vein, teachers can explore the story "The Unicorn in the Garden" to teach some description. For instance, writing a short piece of description comparing the personality traits of the two characters " the husband and the wife". If the traits are not mentioned explicitly, as with the Unicorn in the Garden case, the teacher should model how to use the inference strategy to pick them out from the text.

Application

> *Teacher: Let me go back to the text specifically to the first paragraph. When the husband saw a unicorn in the garden, he was totally confused and surprised. Under this emotion of surprise, fear, and confusion, he went up to inform his wife. But as I can see she just " turned her back." This is an ill-mannered behavior. She should have given much attention to her husband trying to understand what happened. Let me refer to the word bank if I can find the word for that. Ok, I found it. I can use the word "indifferent."*

The word bank (a vocabulary scaffold) as shown in the activity below is given to help the students surmount the challenge of " how I can say that in English?"

> **Instruction**: In the left-hand column, write the character traits of the characters in the story. You can choose an appropriate adjective from the word bank below.
> In the right hand-column, list how the trait is revealed in the text.
> (Traits can be revealed by events, actions, words, thoughts, attitudes, and

Feelings.) An example is provided for you

Word Bank Vocabulary				
1-friendly	4-liar	7-ill-mannered	10-smart	13-impolite
2-patient	5-polite	8-warm	11-selfish	14-unfriendly
3-honest	6-rude	9-indifferent	12-faithful	15-well-mannered

Table 9.6: Word Bank Vocabulary

Character: The wife	
Trait	Revealed by…
Unfriendly	Action: She opened one unfriendly eye

Character: The husband	
Trait	Revealed by…

Figure 9.1:Character Trait Chart

Students write character traits of the two characters after a series of scaffolded

writing stages. The teacher, now, can provide a more challenging task accompanied with the appropriate amount of scaffolding, to make the shift from sentential level to paragraph then to an essay level.

Independent Writing Task: *A contrast essay* in which the emphasis is on differences between the two Characters.

Scaffolds: Character trait chart, word bank vocabulary, contrast signal words, writing Framework, (Figure 9.2).

Introduction:………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
……….

Paragraph 2: The wife is…………………… This is revealed by………………………..
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………………

Paragraph 3: On the other hand, the husband…………………………because…………..
……………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Conclusion: Personally, I think ……………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………...………………

Figure 9.2: Four Paragraphs Contrast Essay Writing Framework

9-6 From Others-Regulation to Self-Regulation Writing

Writing a Story Report (follow up)

As seen in a summary writing lesson, while demonstrating, the teacher put her thoughts into words, articulating the skills needed for writing a summary. Under this interactive writing atmosphere, the students, as contributors and collaborators, engage in ongoing dialogue with the expert (teacher). Through the dialogue, the students shape, refine and expand their comprehension. Now, the students are asked to prepare a story report (see the steps in Chapter Seven) in which a story plot summary is involved. Learners work together and assist one another. Within *this collaborative agency event* (van Lier, 2008), *the More Knowledgeable Others* (MKO) can model his/her expertise to other members. Some students are skillful in terms of grammar (e.g., the appropriate use of tenses, agreement, articles, pronouns); others are talented regarding coherence (e.g., linking ideas using appropriate link words). On the other hand, others, equipped with a rich vocabulary repertoire, might contribute with synonyms or expressions. Others might be proficient in reference to reprocessing information. Ideally, students are aware of the skills included in writing a summary and are ready for independent writing. They are assigned to read Jack London's "To Build a Fire" short story, prepare a story report, as modeled in the class, in which they are required to find out the elements of the story and summarize the story events. Figure 9.3 and 9.4 are samples of students' individual writing. The students are low intermediate ESL students. This is supposed to be their first experience reading as well as writing about the story. The samples are the first draft, neither edited nor proofread. As we can observe, both students describe the major events as they occur in the story, staying away from trivial details and personal opinion as modeled in the class. However, in comparison to sample 2, sample 1 looks more crafted and in accordance, to some extent, with the plot summary conventions in terms of stating the setting, the main conflict of the story and the use of the signal words (e.g., then, a half hour later, suddenly) in describing the events of the story. The student was more competent regarding the use of the narrative.

9-6 Collaborative Conferring

Revision is also a complex skill that entails many abilities. In addition to linguistic abilities, language use skills, mechanical skills, stylistic skills, rhetorical convention skill and so forth, students need to have the decision-making skills when engaging in revision. To help students develop revision strategy and decision-making skills, teachers can work closely with each of the students. But in case the class is large like in most Algerian classes, it would be almost impossible to confer with students individually. To cope with the situation, teachers can take advantage of MKO. The students work collaboratively to elaborate, edit, proofread and refine their writing using the summary writing checklist (see Figure 9.2). The teacher moves around among the groups assisting, demonstrating, and giving feedback. Calkins (1994) suggests involving the whole class in the peer conferring.

> *When I'm introducing peer conferring into a classroom, I 'm apt to say," There are 32 writing teachers in this room. Every one of you must be a writing teacher."*

However, as Calkins points, teachers should, first, present mini lessons that help students learn revision strategies:

> In order to show what this entails, I might ask the entire class to act as teachers for one child. After the youngster reads a draft out loud, I might lead the class to respond to the draft asking questions to the writer and perhaps making tentative suggestions. (p. 206)

So, it should be more effective if the teacher models the revision process to students. Modeling, in this case, is teaching the students *the problem solving as well as the decision-making skills*. In other words, students should understand the expert decision in terms of revision and teachers should answer their students' wonderings, and explain their "what, why, when and how?" questions. For instance:

1) What makes this idea ambiguous? How can I repair and clarify it better so that my reader will not be confused? Or would it be better if I totally ignore it without investing time and energy struggling in an attempt to clarify it?

2) Why shall I use another word instead of this one?

3) How can I expand this idea further? What resources shall I use to support my idea?

4) Why should I use the simple past instead of the present? What is the rational behind that?

Even though accuracy is an essential element in achieving a clear and effective communication of ideas, it shouldn't be regarded as the core element in the revision process. Teachers need to make their students aware that revision is not synonymous with accuracy achievement. Revision is helping the students to "see more, feel more, think more, learn more" (Calkins, p. 39). Revision, in this sense, should be seen as an opportunity where students discover new ideas, and language forms that will be useful in revising and refining their writing.

Summary Writing Checklist

Did you . . .

- ➤ Include the main ideas from the original text?
- ➤ Select the most important details to support the main idea?
- ➤ Avoid adding any information or comments that were not part of the original text

- ➤ Make your summary the right length (about 1/3 or 1⁄4 of the original
- ➤ Avoid asking questions or using dialogue?
- ➤ Put it in your own words?
- ➤ Put the information in the same order as the text?
- ➤ Edit for correct punctuation and capitalization?
- ➤ Edit for correct spelling?
- ➤ Use different types of sentences

http://www.sscs.cc/Handbook/writing_2008/su_checklst/su_checklst.pdf

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Figure 9.3: A Summary Writing Checklist

To Build a Fire

Many years ago, the man walked down the trail on a cold day in Alaska. It is sixty degrees below zero, ~~his dog behind him~~ he want to went to Henderson Creek. His friends were already there. He was not alone, his dog behind him. At 12 o'clock, he stop to walk, ate his lunch. His fingers began to freeze. He built a fire and kept him warm for a few minutes. Then he continued to walk down the trail. A half hour later, the ice broke, his feet sank into the water. He was angry. Then he built a fire to dry his clothes and boots. Suddenly, a heavy mass of snow dropped down. He want built a fire, too. But the he couldn't success this time. Then he couldn't feel his fingers. He want to kill his dog to keep his fingers warm. He couldn't kill his dog, because he couldn't hold his knife. He jumped up and begin to run, because he's afraid of death. When he tired, he lay in the snow. Then he couldn't feel his body and stand up again. The man died. His dog ran to Henderson Creek.

Figure 9.4: Sample 1

130

The man wants to go. to his friend to a camP and he walked on the ice. This was his first winter in Alaska at sixty degrees below zero. He has a dog It was half dog half wolf. The man and the dog don't like extreme cold and they couldn't awalk all the way. The man make new kadi he wants to build a fire but is deefudut for him because the Ski Pure the snow and ice covered the Earth. The man coulen't feel his hands and his nose, fingers. After that he thought

Kill his dog because he wants to Put his hands in inside the body of dog but the dog ran away and he couldn't hold his Knife. He is fail on ending the trip. He is dead and the dog rain away

Figure 9.5: Sample 2

To Build A fire

Many years ago, the man walked down the trail on a cold day in Alaska. It's sixty degrees below zero, he want to went to Handerson Creek. His friends were already there. He was not alone his dog behind him. At 12 O'clock, he stop to walk ate his lunch. His fingers began to freeze. He built a fire and kept him warm for a few minutes. Then he continued to walk down the trail. A half hour later, the ice broke, his feet sank into the water. He was angry then he built a fire to dry his clothes and boots. Suddenly, a heavy mass of snow dropped down. He want built fire too. But he couldn't success this time. Then he couldn't feel his fingers. He want to kill his dog to keep his fingers warm. He couldn't kill his dog because he couldn't hold his knife. He jumped up and began to run because he's afraid of death. When he tired, he lay in the snow. Then he couldn't feel his body and stand up again. The man died. His dog ran to Handerson Creek.

A Chinese ESL student

Sample 1

To build a fire

The man wants to go to his friend to a camp and he walked on the ice. This was his first winter in Alaska at sixty degree below zero. He has a dog. It was half dog half wolf. The man and the dog don't like extreme cold and they couldn't walk all the way. The man make new he wants to build a fire but is deefuclut for him because the ski pure the snow and ice covered the earth. The man couldn't feel his hands and his nose, fingers. After that he thought kill his dog because he wants to put hands in inside the body of the dog, but the dog ran away and he couldn't hold his knife. He is fail ending his trip. He is dead and the dog ran away.

A Saudi Arabian ESL student

Sample 2

Conclusion

Most EFL/ESL students consider writing as the most puzzling and elusive activity. This is because we have taught it in ways that make it so (Calkins). As mentioned before, learning doesn't occur in vacuum. Learning occurs through our interaction with others and by watching what others do. In our attempt to change our students' attitude regarding writing as a complex and unattainable activity, we have to change the way we teach it. Our students need to get inside the "expert" inner world. They simply need to *feel, hear and see* how "this solitary cognitive and complex" act is processed. They need to understand what skilled writers actually do to develop their writing skills: how they generate ideas, refine them, solve problem, and making choices. Responding to these struggling writers' needs, teachers have to demonstrate what's happening inside the writer's mind, modeling the complex thinking processes that underlie the writing skill. In so doing, instructors are making the invisible visible, the unclear clear, and the unattainable accessible. They are helping their students understand, recognize and internalize the thinking strategies used to approach trouble spots. Some believe that modeling, as an instructional strategy, reduces the learners' creativity and autonomy, as it will result in one way of thinking. They claim that learning occurs in challenging situations where the learners' thinking and creativity is spurred to find a solution. Yet, our teaching practices has informed us that exposing the learners to challenging situations, and leaving them relying solely on their own effort, struggling with inadequate support, leads, most of the time, to frustration, anxiety and an early retirement from learning. Additionally, modeling shouldn't be regarded as an imitative mindless activity. On the contrary, while observing others demonstrating the task, learners are actively engaged in, the Vygotskian's term, private speech, decoding, encoding and shaping their thought. Learners shouldn't be thought of as " one person," therefore, expecting one reaction and thus one way of thinking. One model can provoke various responses from different learners or from the same learner at different times (Bandura). This happens because learners are variables with different rates of learning, prior knowledge, different attitudes, interests and experiences and so forth. Modeling, in this sense, requires teachers to be diligent, well prepared, and prepare a model that motivates the learners to go beyond their present learning. I would like to wrap up with an ancient Chinese proverb that said "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach

him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." And this is what modeling should be about.

CHAPTER TEN

WRITING FRAMES AND GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AS SCAFFOLDS

Introduction

In our earlier discussion, we have seen how unfair it is to assign students to write in any genre (e.g., a report, a public statement, a letter of complaint) whilst they have no information about its features, organization, the form and language used in such a particular genre. If the students haven't been taught how to structure these forms, undoubtedly, they will be overwhelmed and confronted with the problem of "the blank page," having no cues how to start. We need rather to provide the learners with *writing frames* or *templates*, based on genre or text structure, because they scaffold students' written responses to a large extent and give them a structure within which they can hang their ideas and help them make a start. During my teaching experience, I have come to conclude that ELLs, in particular under-achieving and struggling ones, rarely plan and organize ideas when engaged in writing. And the same observation has been reported when writing essays in their first language, Arabic, and in other subjects, such as history. These learners generally get low scores because, according to teachers, they "just write everything," they don't know how to process information giving the essential and leaving out the useless. The lack of organizing and processing information skill is not an innate deficiency that our students are born with. It is mostly related to some deficiency in our teaching. We can't get blood out of stone. If learners are not taught the skills of organizing and processing information, should we expect them to do so? To deal with organizational skills deficiencies, researchers have provided us with effective tools known as graphic organizers. The implementation of graphic organizers in teaching has been shown to be very effective, if used strategically and effectively, in developing the literacy, cognitive and organizational skills of students.

10.1 What is Writing Frames?

A writing frame is defined as "a skeleton outline to scaffold pupils' writing of a particular text type." The skeleton framework consists of different key words or phrases, according to the particular generic form"(Lewis & Wray, 1998, p. 3). Writing frames

strategy is designed to support pupils by providing *a structure* (the frame) and *prompts* (the language or/and specific vocabulary). Figure 10.1 represents a writing frame specifically designed for a story plot summary. The structure needs to be withdrawn over a period of time, so that the pupils can write independently and effectively without the frame.

10.2 How Can Writing Frames Scaffold Students' Writing?

Writing frames have proved to be powerful tools in assisting students in their writing assignments. They are effective "scaffolds" that save those overwhelmed, overanxious and disadvantaged struggling ESL/EFL writers from groping in the dark, staring at a blank page looking for any kind of answer. These templates, suitable starters, serve as a support and help students' affective filters to be down. They provide an outline around which the students structure their own idea, and direct their writing towards a particular purpose. In any manner, these templates shouldn't be used as a prefabricated mold that might inhibit, limit and structure the thinking and creativity of more able students (Bruce, 2004). Teachers need to use them wisely and effectively. Once the students develop an awareness of how to structure their ideas within a particular frame using appropriate text pattern signals, teachers are advised to withdraw these structures. "Therefore, freeing up pupils to generate their own ideas and apply them using their own structures should become a priority"(Bruce, para. 5).

10-3 Modeling the Use of Writing frames

Writing frames can be used either implicitly or explicitly as a part of the process of learning to write. However, ESL/EFL struggling writers need explicit and guided instruction that helps to make assigned tasks transparent to them. Before sending students off to do their writing tasks, teachers might model and give examples on how to use the writing frames. It will certainly take time and practice for them to develop competence. Students may work in groups or with partners. The more they become competent the more they move towards independence, applying what they have acquired to similar but new situations.

A summary Plot Writing Frame

The Story is written by---

The story starts when--

The problem is ---

Later---

The problem is solved when--

Figure 10.1: A Summary Writing Plot for a Short Story

As shown in the Figure 10.1, the writing frame provides important text pattern signals used in writing a summary about a story. Key words such as " the story starts when" reminds the students about the importance of stating the setting of the story as an introduction of the summary. The phrase " the problem is" draws his/her attention to the necessity to mention the problem or conflict of the story.   If my Saudi Arabian ESL student (see Chapter Nine) had used it, he might have come up with a more crafted piece of writing.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                         │
│      How to write a set of Instructions │
│                                         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘

      ┌────────────────────────────────┐
      │                                │
      │  Title: ---------------------- │
      │                                │
      └────────────────────────────────┘
```

```
┌──────────────────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Ingredients/equipment        │    │ Picture                          │
│                              │    │                                  │
│                              │    │                                  │
│  ---------------------------- │    │                                  │
│  ---------------------------- │    │                                  │
│  ---------------------------- │    │                                  │
│                              │    │                                  │
└──────────────────────────────┘    └──────────────────────────────────┘
```

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Numbered instructions                                                      │
│                                                                            │
│                                                                            │
│    1.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│    2.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│    3.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│    4.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│    5.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│    6.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│    7.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│    8.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│    9.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│   10.  ----------------------------------------------------------------    │
│                                                                            │
│            Source:  http://www.primarytexts.co.uk/free_resources.html      │
│                                                                            │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

```
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Useful words: First Secondly Finally Put Place Slice Cut Chop Use Check    │
│ Wash Sprinkle Stir Mix Fold Add Take Stir Glue Paint Stick                 │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 10.2: A Writing Frame for Procedural Pattern

The writing frame, as in Figure 10.1, provides the students with a generic form around which they can structure their own idea, and directs their writing towards a particular purpose. The purpose, in this case, will be describing a series of sequenced instructions included in a recipe. The writing frame is also a reminder about the different characteristics of instructional texts. For instance, the title describes the purpose (e.g., how to make a pizza). The numbered bullet points and the signal words (first, secondly, finally) are indicators of the necessity to call for a procedural pattern. The same text-form can fit any instructional text as shown in the following writing assignments.

1-Giving Directions: Give a friend direction to your home from theirs. Some useful words: turn, straight, corner, block, intersection, landmark

2-Looking for a school: Write down the procedure for getting information and applying to a school. Some useful words: call up, tuition, enroll, apply, register, interview

3-Using a library: Write down the step-by-step instructions for finding a book in a library and checking it out. Some useful words: librarian, call number, check out, reserve

(adapted from: Marcue, 2008, pp. 45-47)

Figure 10.3 Topics for Instructional Text-Type

10.4 What is a Graphic Organizer?

A graphic organizer is an instructional tool in a form of graphic display. It serves to facilitate learning by allowing students to visually identify key points and ideas and also recognize the relation between concepts. Graphic organizers come in various forms and are used in different subject areas such as mathematics, physics, social studies, science, reading and writing. They are also flexible tools; they can be modified according to the teacher's needs and they can be incorporated at any phase of the instructional cycle (pre-during or after the instruction). For instance, before presenting the new material, the students are provided with a word splash graphic organizer to assess their prior knowledge in relation to the new topic. (See Figure 8.6 in Chapter Eight). .

10.5 Types of Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers come in many varieties. Each one is appropriate for organizing a particular type of information. However, they can be classified into three main types: *sequential information, a single main concept, and more complex information* (Drafke, 1993, para. 1).

10.5.1 Sequential information graphic organizers

These are graphic displays that depict serial information, for instance *timelines, cyclical, hierarchies and flowcharts*. They can be designed to suit and represent both simple as well as complex information.

Application

Cause-effect flowchart (Kaoru Ishikawa, 1990) is an organizer that graphically illustrates the relationship between an effect (a problem) and the factors or root causes that have led to that effect.

Writing task: Teaching cause and effect organizational patterns

Type of discourse: expository

Goal: Inform the reader about the problem of stress and its root causes

Graphic organizer: *cause and effect flowchart*

Topic: Write *an expository article* for your college newspaper or your school website, analyzing the causes, effects of stress on students and suggesting ways to cope with it.

Procedure

1. Select the problem to analyze, for instance, stress in college students

2. Define the problem using a brainstorming

3. Draw a horizontal arrow to the right. Write the problem or effect title "Stress" and draw a box around it. See Diagram 10.2

4. Identify and select the causes that most likely contribute to the effect. Draw boxes around the causes and connect the boxes to the central line to form the fishbone. The

more causes are identified, the more boxes are needed

5. Students, then, are free to select and circle causes, they think, are the relevant according to their experience
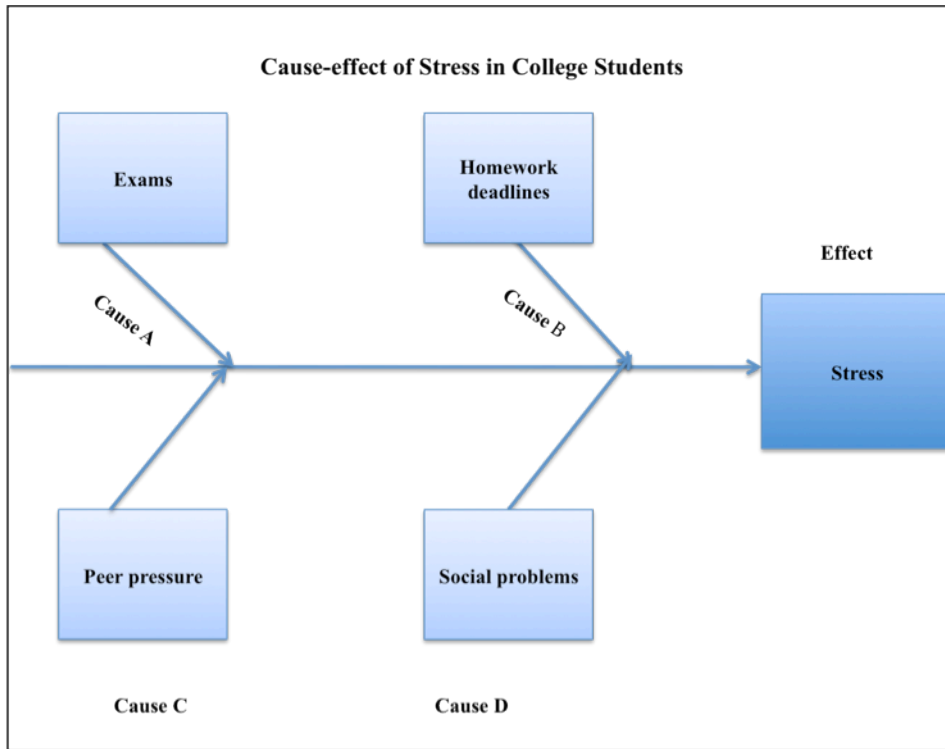
Cause-effect of Stress in College Students

Exams

Homework deadlines

Effect

Cause A

Cause B

Stress

Peer pressure

Social problems

Cause C

Cause D

Diagram 10.1: cause-effect flowchart

To make the writing more supportive, the task can be accompanied with a mini-lesson in which the teacher introduces the students to the different cause-effect markers using modeling strategy. It will be an opportunity to teach these link words in context using a visual tool. This will increase the students' comprehension regarding the way the ideas are related and hence help the learners develop a skill in terms of cohesion, making the connectedness between the ideas crystal clear. These link words can be either displayed on a chart or duplicated as shown in Figure 10.3.

Additionally, because graphic organizers are flexible tools, instructors or students can modify, add, delete, change the boxes in the organizers, whatever seems appropriate and convenient to them. As observed in Figure 10.3, three boxes have been added

including three sub-effects.

If the Cause-effect flowchart is integrated during the reading comprehension (deconstructing the text), teachers should take advantage of using the same graphic to reconstruct the text. In so doing, both as a reader and as a writer of the same text, the students will develop more awareness of the way the text is organized.

Introducing a cause		
Cause markers as	Illustration	
Verbs	Result from Be caused by (+ N. phrase) Stem from	His stress *results from* being under too much pressure.
Phrases	As a result of Because of (+ N. phrase) Due to	He becomes stressed *because of* too much pressure.
Conjunctions	As Because (+Subject + Verb) Since	*Because* he has too much work to do, he becomes stressed.
Introducing an effect		
Effect markers as	Illustration	
Transition signals	Therefore Consequently + (Subject +V) As a result So	He couldn't cope with the new life in the college. *Therefore*, he becomes stressed
Verbs	Result in Lead to + (Noun phrase) Contribute to	This stressful life contributes to low-achievement in school.

Figure 10.4: Cause-Effect Markers

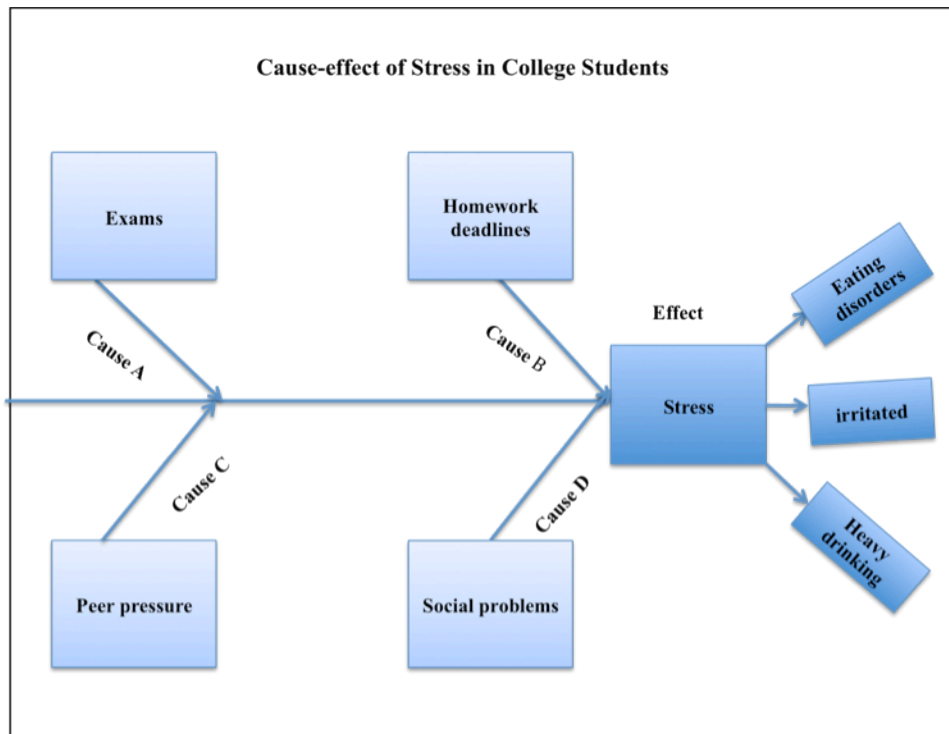**Cause-effect of Stress in College Students**

Diagram 10.2: Cause-Effect and Sub-Effects Flowchart

Text Reconstruction: Reconstruct the text, using the information in the diagram, and appropriate link words from the list provided

Figure 10.5

10.5.2 Single Main Concept Graphic Organizers

These are graphics that represent information having a single main concept. Information that is linked to the main concept or idea is included on either side of, or around the idea (Drafke). *Spider maps, continua and argumentation structure* are graphic organizers that are well suited to illustrate this definition.

Application

Spider Map: As the name implies, spider map looks like a spider's web. It is used to represent a central idea and its attributes

Genre: Short story

Story title: Building a Fire

Describing: Theme and the sub themes of the story

Graphic organizer: *Theme Chart*

Procedure

- write the central theme in the center;
- write the related sub-themes around the sub-themes, connected by lines;
- investigate the attributes/qualities associated with each of these sub-themes;
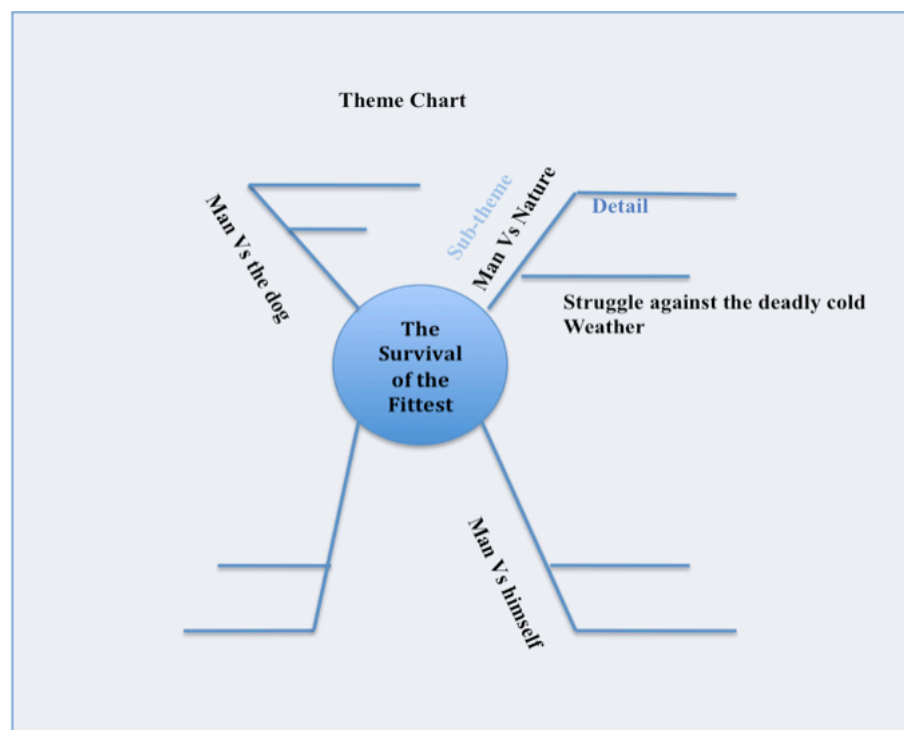- Connect these details to their sub-themes with lines. (See Figure 10.4).

Theme Chart

Sub-theme

Man Vs the dog

Man Vs Nature

Detail

Struggle against the deadly cold
Weather

The
Survival
of the
Fittest

Man Vs himself

Diagram 10.3: Theme Chart

Continua Graphic Organizers: *A* continuum looks the same as a timeline, yet it is not serial (Drafke). *Continuum represents materials that contain a range of gradation between two extremes such as* shades of meaning, or rating scales. Figure 10.6 represents a sample continuum.

Many
High
Always

Continuum

few
low
never

extreme

Opposite
extreme
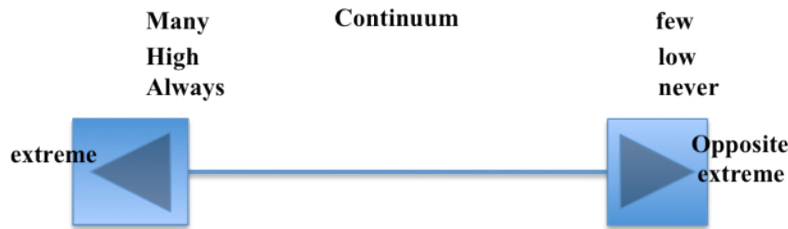
Diagram 10.4: Continuum Graphic Organizer

10.5.3 More Complex Information Organizers

As the name suggests, this category represents material that contains more than one concept. Venn diagrams are a good illustration of this type of organizers.

Application

Venns (John Venn) are graphic displays that comprise overlapping circles. Venn can support more than two sets. They are used to represent similarities and differences between persons, objects or things. The interior circle examines the similarities whereas the exterior represents the differences

Writing *a comparison essay* in which the emphasis is on the similarities

Pre-writing task: Brainstorming, generating ideas,

Type of discourse: expository

Topic: Anorexia and bulimia nervosa

Graphic organizer: Venn diagram

Topic: Many students don't *know* the difference between anorexia and bulimia nervosa. You and your group member decide to do on the matter and write an article for your school magazine explaining the difference.

Procedure

Collect information related to anorexia and bulimia

Draw two overlapping circles

After identifying the common points that anorexia and bulimia nervosa share, write them down in the interior circle of the diagram

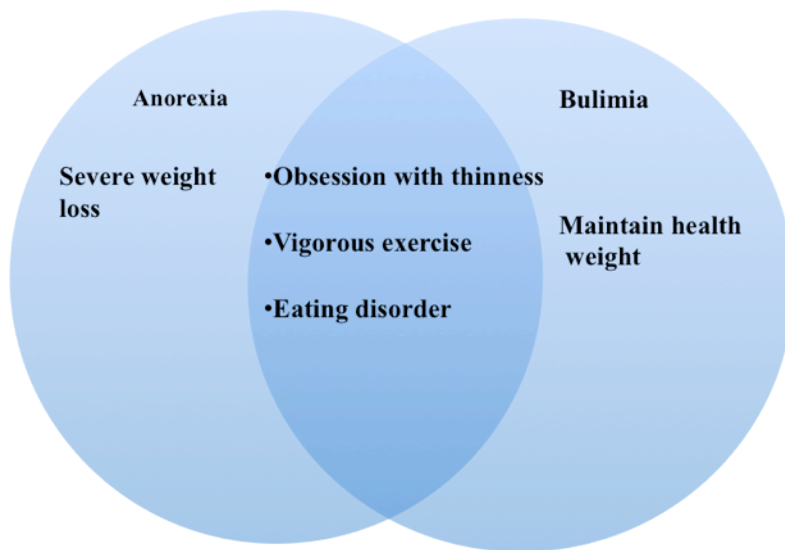The features specific to each illness should be written in the exterior circles

Anorexia

Severe weight loss

•**Obsession with thinness**

•**Vigorous exercise**

•**Eating disorder**

Bulimia

Maintain health weight

Figure 10.7: Venn diagram comparing anorexia and bulimia nervosa

When the above diagram is implemented during the reading stage, students can benefit enormously. It will help them identify the text structure of the text, its pattern signals and hence they will get the picture of the type and form of the text. Again, to consolidate their understanding of a comparison essay in which the emphasis is on the similarities, teachers can ask their students to reconstruct the text using the information in the diagram accompanied by comparison markers.

10.6 Benefits of Implementing Graphic Organizers

Several cognitive theories support the use of graphic organizers. Cognitive Load Theory, for instance, claims that our memory has a limited capacity in retaining information. This capacity differs from a person to another. If its capacity is exceeded, the information becomes difficult to be retained and is easy to lose (Wills, 2005). However, this cognitive load can be reduced through different modes of instructions (Wills). Graphic organizers, as visual tools, have been documented to be very effective tools in facilitating learning. They are considered to be " less is more" tools as they play a vital role in highlighting only important information, leaving *out* the trivial. In that sense, they ease information processing and reduce the cognitive demand on the learner. Schema Theory also emphasizes the effectiveness of graphic organizers. Schema Theory postulates that memory is a sort of network of schemas. Schemas, defined as a prior knowledge, can be activated and recalled using graphic organizers. Graphic organizers, in this sense, serve to link new to existing information, increase comprehension, and improve long-term memory retention. Additionally, they have been reported to be powerful tools in developing processing information and organizational skills. For instance, when students were preparing their writing assignment about cause and effect of stress on students, they came up with a large number of ideas in terms of causes and effects. The teacher, then, decided to implement *Cause-effect flowchart* for the following reasons:

- Students generally do not differentiate between a cause and an effect. Cause-effect flowchart will be the appropriate tool to sort out the generated ideas into causes and effects so that it becomes easier and clearer for them to link the ideas into cause-effect relationship creating a coherent piece of writing.

- To cope with the overwhelming information that students come up with during the brainstorming stage, and reduce the number of ideas to a manageable number,

- To select important ideas from less-essential ones.

- To help those with organizational skill deficiencies organize and arrange information in cause and effect relationship

Conclusion

According to Vygotskian's principle, learning is *mediated* through the use of tools, often called "*mediational-means,*" these mediational tools are central to learning and are used as " aids in solving problems that cannot be solved in their absence"(Turuk, p. 245). Graphic organizers and writing frames play a vital role as mediational and instructional tools in pedagogy. They have been widely researched for their effectiveness in scaffolding and enhancing learning. If writing templates, as good starters, help learners develop an awareness of how to structure their ideas within a particular frame using appropriate text pattern signals and hence develop skill in writing in different text forms, graphic organizers have been documented to be powerful tools that help develop strategic and organizational skill. Because of these significant benefits, instructors should implement them in their writing lessons to make them more supportive.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

Learning English becomes a necessity, as it is the most used medium of interaction in international organizations, conferences, economy, Internet and so forth. In this globalized world, where international interaction is an evident feature, Algeria has put great emphasis on the importance of teaching English so as to help the Algerian society interact as an active agent with the external world, exchanging ideas, experiences, and cultures and also integrating effectively in the process of globalization. As the competency-based approach builds on the premise that views language as functional and interactional, and whose main objective is to develop communicative competence, the Ministry of Education has actively engaged in implementing this approach in its educational system since 2002. Besides developing students' oral competency in English, the Ministry of Education expects to develop students' writing competency in producing different types of discourse (descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository, injunctive) upon the completion of the secondary school studies. However, students complete their school year without being able to meet these " high expectations." They enter university and enroll in English studies or other related field with serious deficiencies in writing. For EFL secondary school students and in particular 3AS students, writing is the most daunting and elusive task. If our students resist writing, this is not because writing is inherently a dreaded and elusive task, but because it has been taught in a context and "in ways that make it so" (Calkins, p. 13). Because the educational system is exam-oriented and the English exam is primarily grammar-focused, it makes writing seem more product-oriented. Writing is treated as an ancillary skill practicing language, reinforcing linguistic knowledge, vocabulary, and syntactic patterns studied within the units. However, writing is more than linguistic competency (capabilities in articulating the ideas accurately and fluently). It is, in fact, an amalgam of different interwoven "knowledge(s)" that interplay producing a piece of clear, fluent and effective writing. It is a demanding and laborious skill that calls for other abilities including:

1- capabilities in generating ideas about a given topic (This requires knowledge of the world);

3- capabilities in hanging these ideas on their appropriate rhetorical patterns and rhetorical conventions of written texts; (Genre knowledge);

4- capabilities in communicating the ideas appropriately so as to avoid the trap of misunderstanding (cross-cultural knowledge).

Nevertheless, while a great number of the students have schema deficiencies at the different levels (content, genre and linguistic schemata) with quite poor writing skills even at the sentence level, they are assigned ambitious, unrealistic tasks that are irrelevant to their abilities, language proficiency and interests. The problem is further compounded by leaving them alone struggling without enough assistance. The result would be, undoubtedly, an early retirement from learning writing as it is already conceived as an impossible mission to undertake. On the other hand, while writing, as a complex task, needs much time and practice to learn its different components (e.g., organization, vocabulary, syntax) and its various skills from identifying the purpose and the audience to brainstorming and generating ideas to drafting, to revising ideas to proofreading, little time is given to this skill. Teachers, under excessive work demands, time constraints and the burdens of teaching both English and writing, tend to be dogmatic about their practices. And although many in-service training and seminars are held every year to enhance the teaching practices, not much is done to improve the teaching of writing skills.

Drawing upon David Hawkins's (I, THOU, IT) framework (1967), I would say that *teaching writing right* requires teachers who keep connecting the three dimensions (I, THOU and IT) that is to say, (Teacher, Student and Subject matter) in any writing lesson plan. By that, I mean they should be fully engaged and informed about the subject matter (IT), the different writing approaches and draw on the best of what these orientations suggest, taking into account their teaching contexts. They also need to be aware of the (THOU), I mean their students' needs, abilities, prior knowledge and interests. Otherwise, the students will feel certain disconnection from the subject matter, which will look like a

foreign body. This disconnection from the subject matter will more often create certain distance and barriers between the "self" of the teacher and the learner's "self."   And because of this disconnection, writing becomes a dreaded activity and the least popula*r* skill (see Figure 11.1).
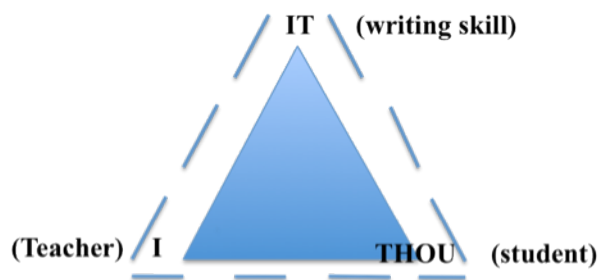

**Figure 11.1: Disconnection between the (I,
THOU and IT)**

Drawing upon my teaching experience, my training at UCCON, my theoretical reading mainly about the socio-cultural theory and its impact on my teaching philosophy, my academic study in SIT, I have been able to broaden my scope of teaching and change my attitude towards teaching writing.

Drawing upon all this cumulative history, I would conclude:

1) Learners *can write* only if they are *effectively taught* how to write.

2) Teaching writing should be redefined as Tharp and Gallimore's term "*assisted performance.*" Teaching writing effectively is *assisting the learners* to perform just beyond their current capacity. If the students are assigned challenging writing tasks without enough support, their affective filter will be high as they will be frustrated, anxious, disengaged and de-motivated.

3) While writing is often considered a solitary act, it is also social and interactional (Hyland, p. 27) as learning to write never occurs in a vacuum. Writing can be promoted through the implementation of an interactive writing course that involves cooperative activities. Through cooperative activities, the learner activates and builds his/her schemata, generates thoughts, increases their semantic repertoire and finds answers to their questions and wonderings.

4) "If I had to reduce all educational psychology to just one principal, I would say this: The most important single factor influencing learning is *what the learner already knows*. Ascertain this *and teach him accordingly*"(Ausubel (1968, p. vi, my italics). Educators should capitalize on students' schemata in terms of content, linguistic, and genre schemas whenever they prepare their lesson plans. In the case of schema deficiency, they should provide enough background knowledge about the topic, genre text format, conventions and language required for the topic.

5) To make writing lesson plans more supportive, instructors should *incorporate visuals* (videos, picture prompt, graphic organizers, provocative pictures, use of multimedia in their classes) at any stage of the process of writing. For instance, graphic organizers, which come in different forms such as flow charts and time lines, are widely acknowledged to be beneficial particularly to those with organizational difficulties. If visual materials, such as mediational and anchoring tools, are central to learning, teachers need to learn to teach writing visually.

6) "Writing has to be preceded and accompanied by *wide exposure* to appropriate models of written language" (Byrne, 86, p. 30). Teachers need to expose their learners to different writing models giving them ample opportunities to identify and develop awareness that every genre has particular characteristics that distinguish it

from others. Besides identifying the genre's features, the learners need to "be made aware of *how we communicate* through the written medium"(Byrne, p. 30, my italics). They need to see not only the thinking processes included in any kind of genre writing but should also be given enough opportunities to practice the skill.

7) Teachers need to question and reflect on their writing teaching practices. They should question what helped and what hindered and what actions to take to help students improve their writing. To take effective actions, teachers should be updated about current literacy research as teaching is a dynamic process that changes according to the context and to the learners' needs and

abilities, aspirations and preferences.

8) Teaching writing is not about editing and proofreading. Linguistic accuracy, even though it is an important component, should not be at the forefront of the writing instruction. Otherwise, writing will look meaningless.

9) Teaching writing should be student driven rather than curriculum oriented. Teaching processes should be adjusted in the light of emergent practices and learners' contributions and actions.

On the other hand, teaching/learning in the wider context is a complex puzzle made of three important pieces (I, THOU, and IT); in this case I mean, policy makers (I), teacher/students (THOU) and subject matter (IT). If one piece is ignored or disconnected, the puzzle will never be solved (see Figure 11.2). For that reason, before planning for the outcomes and the expected output, policy makers should zoom out the teaching/learning context and see if the expectations are in accordance with the context. For an appropriate zooming out, they need to integrate the (THOU), meaning students as well as teachers. In so doing, the following result can be expected:

The teaching/learning context is not helpful to teach/learn writing adequately and sufficiently because of the following factors (refer to Chapter four):

1) Students, allotted 3 to 4 hours a week to learn EFL barely get enough opportunities to be exposed to a literacy rich environment that helps them acquire the language.

Needless to say, writing is a complex skill that entails many sub-skills. Thus, a major problem arises when the learners are assigned writing tasks beyond their literacy abilities.

2) Time pressure, workload and teaching large classes impede teachers to self-develop and hence teach writing effectively.

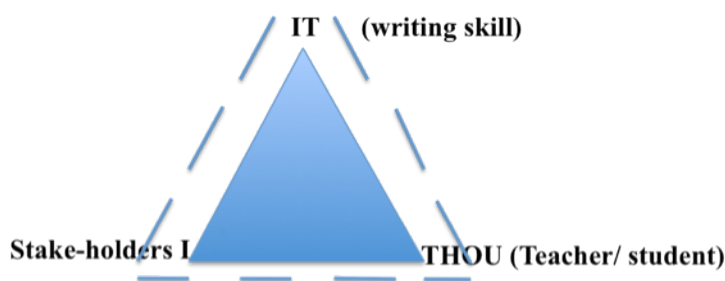3) Teachers are prepared as teachers of EFL and not as teachers of writing.

Figure 11.2: Disconnection between the (I, THOU and IT)

If the educational system has put great emphasis on the importance of teaching English and has invested enormously since 2002 to prepare competent learners able to interact accurately and fluently in oral as well as in written language with the external world and to cope with new realities, it should, then, reconsider the teaching context of teaching English and the writing skill in particular. After the context analysis, I would suggest the followingTo meet the expectations, more time is required for the teaching of English and thus for the teaching of writing.

1) Because teachers are trained to be EFL instructors and not teachers of writing, teachers themselves, particularly novice ones, need assistance before they can assist their students to improve their writing.   By that I mean teachers need to have training and workshops on how to teach writing effectively.

2) Learning to write is a long- term project that starts with the first literacy years of the child because it is a demanding and laborious skill that calls for many sub-skills.

3) Coordination, partnership and connection between **I** (Stake-holders), **THOU** (Teachers and students) and **IT**(the subject matter) is crucial before planning for the curriculum.

Before closing my thesis, I have to draw your attention that my research paper is based on **KASA** (*Knowledge, Awareness, Skills, and Attitude*), the principles of my graduate school SIT.

Awareness

Through this paper, and through Chapter Four and Six I aim at raising teachers' awareness about the necessity of using scaffolding as an effective strategy to teach writing. I also aim at raising the stakeholders' awareness that the current teaching/learning context is not helpful to teach/learn writing adequately and sufficiently.

Knowledge

Chapter Five and Six are the more knowledge-based part. My aim is to inform, even briefly, my EFL/ESL colleagues about the different writing approaches so that they can draw on the best of what these orientations suggest, taking into account their teaching contexts. I also intend to inform them about the effectiveness of "scaffolding" in providing a solid framework that can help struggling writers surmount the problem of writing.

Skills

Chapters Seven, Eight, Nine and Ten are more skill-based part. My aim is to provide the teachers with some hands-on activities that they can use or they can themselves develop to enhance their students' writing skill.

Attitude

My whole research paper is focused on attitude-based changing. My aim is to help students regain their self-confidence as "anyone can write." In our attempt to change our students' attitude regarding writing as a complex and unattainable activity, we have to change the way we teach it. This goal can only be attained if the teachers, equipped with enough expertise, adjust the writing instruction so that it meets the needs of the struggling writers.

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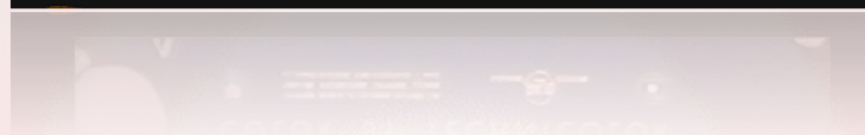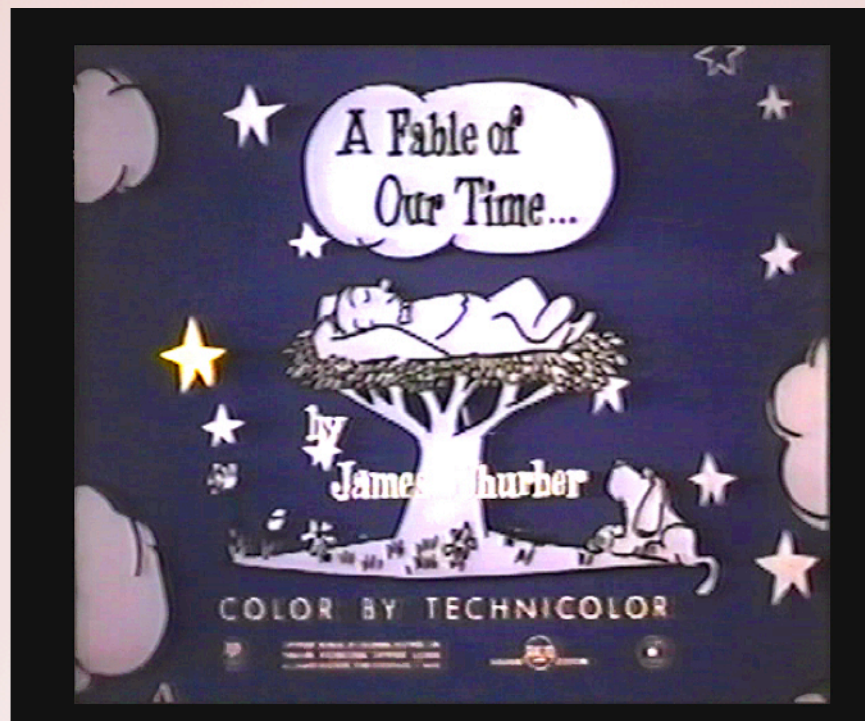
Lesson plan

1-Who are your students?

They are International students, coming from different cultural backgrounds namely Saudi Arabia, Korea, Columbia and Laos. They are aged between 17 and up. Their levels vary between beginner English to advanced English. Their learning objectives are different:

a) TOFEL preparation
b) Academic preparation
c) Enhancing reading and writing skills

This lesson is planned mainly for high intermediate level .The tasks can be adapted according to different levels.

2- what are you teaching?

➢ Vocabulary related to the story
 E.g. beast, mythical, unicorn etc.

 Some idiomatic expressions
 E.g. a gloat in her eye

➢ Simple past (narration)
 The past perfect and simple past with time conjunction
 As soon as he *had gone*, his wife *got up.*

➢ Language skills

 Highlight the primary skill and underline any other you will address

 Speaking-listening- **reading** -**writing** –Vocabulary-grammar

➢ Cultural aspects
 Exploring American short stories

3-Objectives of the lesson

By the end of this lesson students will be able to:

➢ Predict the content of the story
➢ Answer reference and inference questions

- ➢ Identify the main elements of a short story
- ➢ Re-tell the story using its main elements: event, characters and, plot
- ➢ Write a different ending

In meeting the above objectives, students will use the following strategies:

- ➢ Prediction
- ➢ Prior knowledge
- ➢ Scanning
- ➢ Skimming
- ➢ Inferring
- ➢ Analyzing and summarizing

Preliminary consideration

 Students might already be familiar with the vocabulary in the reading passage. I anticipate students will have problems with few words such us, tulip, lily the slang "booby hatch", booby that might hinder the understanding of the text. To elucidate the meaning, the teacher can help the students using word *relation* **technique**, for example, tulip and lily belong to the class of items" flowers". The word "booby hatch" belongs to the same lexical set of " crazy". Or a matching activity can be given beforehand.

Materials used

- • Overhead projector -Visuals- chalkboard/white board– handout-DVD or VCR
- • News Prints

Time allotted
    As the lesson includes the four skills besides grammar, the lesson will take almost
    6 hours

References (for the movie or Cartoon)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkPOCJRlkUc (movie)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1teJjX-smdE   (cartoon)

In this Chapter you will:

- **Predict the content of the story**
- **Read a short fairly story**
- **Identify the main elements of a short story**
- **Skim for main ideas**
- **Scan for details**
- **Make inferences**
- **Demonstrate critical thinking**
- **Distinguish between facts and opinions**
- **Review the past perfect with simple past with time conjunction**
- **Write a summary**
- **Write a different ending of the story**

❖ **Pre-Reading**
Discussion
Discuss the answers to these questions with your classmates

1. Of the beasts listed in the box below which ones are real, and which ones are mythical?

┌───┐
│ 1-horse 2-dragon 3-cow 4-unicorn 5-sheep 6-loch Ness monster │
└───┘

2. In what types of stories de we generally find the mythical beast represented in pictures 1 and 2?
3. Have you ever read or heard about a fairly tale?
4. What was it about? Talk about it.
5. Did you like it? Why or why not?

Picture 1

Picture 2

Prediction

The words in the box below constitute key words of the story you are going to read. Use these words or add others to predict the story.

> Unicorn- husband- wife
> Mental institution- garden
> Once upon a time
> Crazy
> Saw

❖ **Reading**

Skimming for Main Ideas

Skimming is reading very quickly to identify ***the main ideas*** of a text leaving out details. You can become an expert text skimmer using the following steps:
- Read the title. The title of a reading often gives the main idea.
- Read the first sentence of each paragraph. The first sentence usually gives the main idea of that paragraph.

Skim the reading " The Unicorn in the Garden."   Then answer the questions.

1. Check your prediction. Is your story you have written the same as the one you have read?
2. Read each question. Circle the letter of the best answer

A-Where was the man when he saw the unicorn?

    a) In the garden
    b) In his bedroom
    c) In the breakfast nook

B-What was the unicorn doing?

    a) Fighting with the police
    b) Sleeping in the garden
    c) Eating flowers in the garden

C-Did his wife believe him

    a) Yes
    b) No
    c) May be

D-When the police and the psychiatrist were exchanging looks, what do you think they were thinking?

    a) The man was crazy
    b) The wife was crazy
    c) They believed in the unicorn

The Unicorn in the Garden

By James Thurber

Once upon a sunny morning a man who sat in a breakfast nook looked up from his scrambled eggs to see a white unicorn with a golden horn quietly cropping the roses in the garden. The man went up to the bedroom where his wife was still asleep and woke her. "There's a unicorn in the garden," he said. "Eating roses." She opened one unfriendly eye and looked at him.

"The unicorn is a mythical beast," she said, and turned her back on him. The man walked slowly downstairs and out into the garden. The unicorn was still there; now he was browsing among the tulips. "Here, unicorn," said the man, and he pulled up a lily and gave it to him. The unicorn ate it gravely. With a high heart, because there was a unicorn in his garden, the man went upstairs and roused his wife again. "The unicorn," he said," ate a lily." His wife sat up in bed and looked at him coldly. "You are a booby," she said, "and I am going to have you put in the booby-hatch."

The man, who had never liked the words "booby" and "booby-hatch," and who liked them even less on a shining morning when there was a unicorn in the garden, thought for a moment. "We'll see about that," he said. He walked over to the door. "He has a golden horn in the middle of his forehead," he told her. Then he went back to the garden to watch the unicorn; but the unicorn had gone away. The man sat down among the roses and went to sleep.

As soon as the husband had gone out of the house, the wife got up and dressed as fast as she could. She was very excited and there was a gloat in her eye. She telephoned the police and she telephoned a psychiatrist; she told them to hurry to her house and bring a straitjacket. When the police and the psychiatrist arrived they sat down in chairs and looked at her, with great interest.

"My husband," she said, "saw a unicorn this morning." The police looked at the psychiatrist and the psychiatrist looked at the police. "He told me it ate a Lilly," she said. The psychiatrist looked at the police and the police looked at the psychiatrist. "He told me it had a golden horn in the middle of its forehead," she said. At a solemn signal from the psychiatrist, the police leaped from their chairs and seized the wife. They had a hard time subduing her, for she put up a terrific struggle, but they finally subdued her. Just as they got her into the straitjacket, the husband came back into the house.

"Did you tell your wife you saw a unicorn?" asked the police. "Of course not," said the husband. "The unicorn is a mythical beast." "That's all I wanted to know," said the psychiatrist. "Take her away. I'm sorry, sir, but your wife is as crazy as a jaybird." So they took her away, cursing and screaming, and shut her up in an institution. The husband lived happily ever after.

Scanning for Details

Scanning is reading to identify specific information or details. Scanning is a technique you often use when looking up a word in the telephone book or dictionary.

Read the passage, and look for details. Circle **T** if the sentence is true. Circle **F** if the sentence is false.

1. Once upon a bright, clear morning, a man saw a white unicorn   **T**   **F**

    furiously cutting the roses in the garden

2. He went up to the bedroom to tell his wife still unawake.   **T**   **F**

3. His wife opened her eyes and said, "The unicorn is an unreal beast."   **T**   **F**

4. When he went back to the garden, the unicorn was still there.   **T**   **F**

5. He went upstairs and woke his wife.   **T**   **F**

6. His wife opened one eye and said, " You are a booby."   **T**   **F**

Making Inferences

Making inferences is reading between lines. Answers to inference question are **not**

explicitly or directly **stated in the text**. Readers deduce or **infer** them from the facts and

the reasoning developed in the text.

1. Are the husband and wife in love with each other? Justify your answer

2. What does the husband mean when he says, "We'll see about that?"

3. Do you think the author prefer the husband to the wife? Argue your point.

4. Write the character traits of the characters (husband and his wife) in the story.

    Follow the instruction below:

Instruction: In the left-hand column, write the character traits of the characters in the story. You can choose an appropriate adjective from the word bank below.

In the right hand-column, list how the trait is revealed in the text.

(Traits can be revealed by events, actions, words, thoughts, attitudes, and
 Feelings.) An example is provided for you.

Character Trait Chart

Character: The wife	
Trait	**Revealed by…**
Unfriendly	Action: She opened one unfriendly eye

Character: The husband	
Trait	**Revealed by…**

Word Bank Vocabulary

1-friendly	4-liar	7-ill-mannered	10-smart	13-impolite
2-patient	5-polite	8-warm	11-selfish	14-unfriendly
3-honest	6-rude	9-indifferent	12-faithful	15-well-mannered

❖ **Post-Reading**

Think, pair, share

Study the interpretations of the story that you have read. Then choose the one you think is the best, or you can give your own interpretation. Justify your choice by giving evidence.

1-The man was dreaming and sleepwalking. After he woke up he remembered nothing of what happened.
2-The wife was mad and imagined the whole incident.
3-The story is just a bad dream recounted by the wife to her husband

Grammar Explorer (past tense review)

1-What tense is mostly used in the reading text? Why?

What are **narrative tenses**? Narrative tenses are the tenses we use in a language to tell a story. They are all of the forms in **past** that a person can possibly use.

Put the verbs () in the correct past tense. Justify your choice. Then discuss with your class

One summer day, Alice (*sit on*) the riverbank with her older sister. Alice's sister (read) a book and Alice (notice) that the book (not have) any pictures, which (make) Alice lose interest in it. Then as she (look) out into the meadow, she (see) something very peculiar. She (see) a large white rabbit running past her looking at his watch saying "Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be too late." Then he (pop) down a rabbit hole. Alice, being the curious girl she (be), followed the rabbit down that hole and (find) herself in a land with many wonders

❖ **Writing**

The main element of a short story

Setting	Characters	Plot	Theme
Where and when did the story happen?	Persons or animals	What happened? Series of events having a beginning, middle and an end. They relate to the central conflict. The conflict is a struggle between two people or things in a short story. The main character is usually on one side of the central conflict	The theme is the central idea or belief in a short story.

With your partner, and referring to "*The Unicorn in the Garden*", discuss the following questions:

1-Where and when did the story happen?
2-Who are the characters?
3-What happened in the story?
4-What is the theme of the story?

Writing a summary
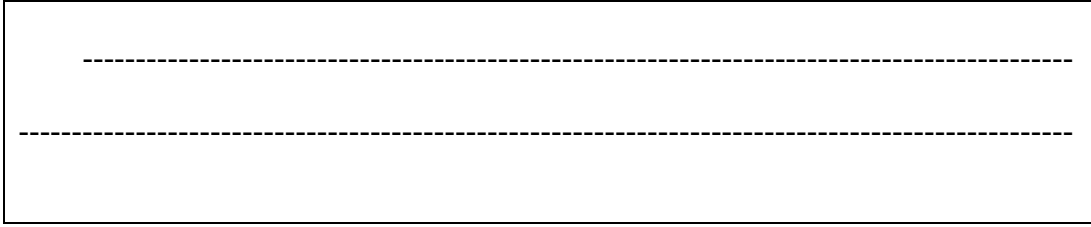
Write a summary of the story (the plot). Use the following diagram.

Guidelines to write a good summary

- Restate the ideas in your own as much as possible.
- List the main ideas in order to show the flow of the plot
- Discard all unnecessary details.
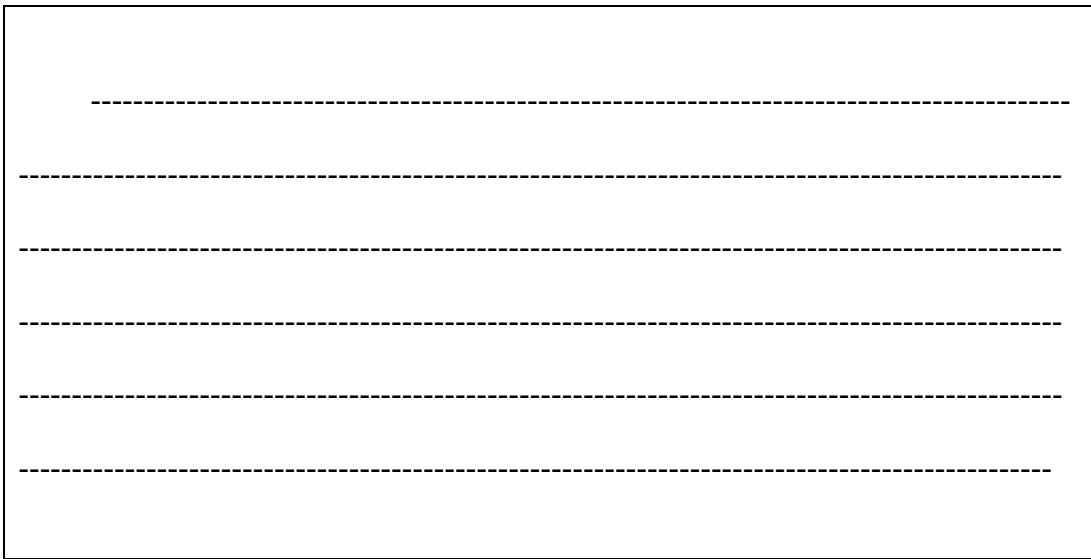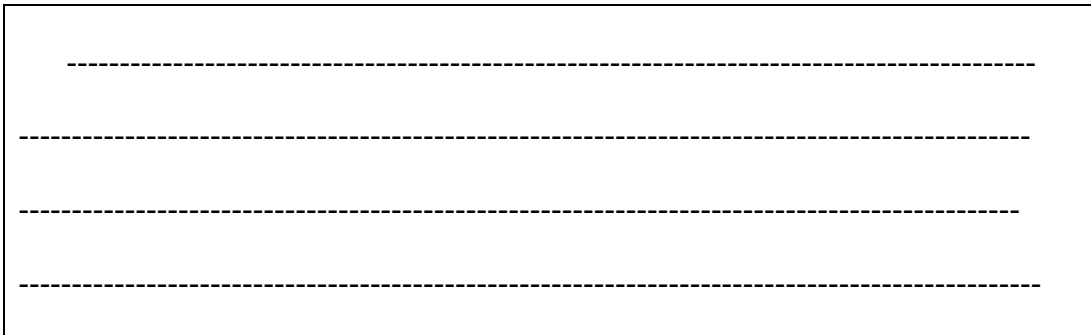- Don't state your opinion. Be faithful to the text

Story Structure

Beginning

Middle

End

Step 1 Write a rough draft

Step 2 Revise your rough draft. Use the writing checklist below. Work alone first.

Summary Writing Checklist

Did you . . .

- ____ include the main ideas from the original text?
- ____ select the most important details to support the main idea?
- ____ avoid adding any information or comments that were not
-        part of the original text

- ____ make your summary the right length (about 1/3 or 1⁄4 of the
         original
- ____ avoid asking questions or using dialogue?
- ____ put it in your own words?
- ____ put the information in the same order as the text?
- ____ edit for correct punctuation and capitalization?
- ____ edit for correct spelling?
- ____ use different types of sentences?

http://www.sscs.cc/Handbook/writing_2008/su_checklst/su_checklst.pdf

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Step 3 Edit your summary with a partner.

Step 4 Write a final copy. Then, give it to your instructor.

Writing a different ending

Group work: Think about a different ending for the story, write about it, and draw a picture of it. Then, share it with your class

Gallery Walk

Walk around in the class.   Use the following writing checklist to assess and select the best writing (Ending of the story)

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Ending Writing Checklist

- Correct use of capital letters and punctuation. _____
- Correct spelling of words_____
- Correct use of narrative tenses
- Sentences are well-constructed_____
- Sentences are related to each other with appropriate link words. _____
- The ending is creative _____
- The drawing matches and illustrates the ending____

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