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IMPORTANCE OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS

Abstract: Importance of classroom activities for developing students' writing skills. This article discusses the importance of classroom activities in developing students' writing skills. In the article there are given some classroom activities as an example in order to use in writing lessons.

Key words: writing, classroom project, using videos, adding drama, letters, writing activities.

Language: English

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Introduction

Nowadays English is considered a global language. Hence, the people of the world try to learn this language as they can do their best. The people who know English have a lot of chances in their study and career. Knowing a foreign language is good because through knowing the foreign language we know this language's culture, traditions, customs, the people of this language. At present in Uzbekistan every parent wants that their children know English, can speak English, can communicate easily in English. As we know communication is held by verbal, non-verbal, written and other ways. Verbal communication includes face-to-face, telephone, radio or television and other media. Nonverbal communication involves communicating by sending and receiving messages without any words. These messages usually reinforce verbal communication, but they can also convey thoughts and feelings on their own. It includes facial expressions, eye contact, body posture, gestures such as a wave, pointed finger and the like, overall body movements, tone of voice, touch, and others. Written communication includes traditional pen and paper letters and documents, typed electronic documents, e-mails, text chats, SMS and anything else conveyed through written symbols such as a language. This type of communication plays a major role in formal business communications and issuing legal

instructions. When we communicate through writing at that time, we can describe our emotions, feelings in the paper, we can write all the things which we have in our mind. The article deals with teaching writing with classroom activities and some efficient ways to improve students' writing. It also touches upon issues related to the content of teaching writing at the present stage of education development.

It is noteworthy that teaching English as a foreign language or a second language to school children is a difficult process. When we talk about young learners, the pupils of primary school, will learn English according to their parents' desire. They may not know the importance of these classes. They might think English classes as simply another fun daily activity and that is just fine. In order to attract these young learners' attention to these English lessons' teacher should encourage and motivate them to develop an interest in learning English. Students at this level are just starting to study at school. Some of the young learners might think school as the intimidating place. Motivating every pupil to participate, making these lessons relaxed and fun are required by teachers. Teaching English to pupils, those attending secondary school, will not be more difficult. Because they have an aim to study, they have their own thinking, outlook, they have an ability to differentiate, have general knowledge about English.

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But conducting them requires much effort from teachers. Teaching advanced level students is much more difficult than others. Because they are students who perform at an advanced academic level when compared with others of same age, experience or environment. These students have a strong grasp of grammar and a large vocabulary in order to hold complex conversations. If their knowledge is complicated, why do they need a teacher for? Most of advanced learners emphasized that even the most advanced ESL learners need to gain a lot from a good ESL teacher who knows how to teach to their level. On one hand, teaching advanced ESL students can be easier but on the other hand it can be much more challenging. Advanced learners are much more focused, disciplined and self-motivated. Teachers do not need to struggle basic classroom rules and expectations to them. Their demands on their ESL teacher are greater than beginners. They will try to test their teacher's abilities and skills, especially how to go beyond the basic grammar pattern lessons and to truly understand the inner workings of language.

There are four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing in teaching English. When we teach English to pupils, we try to improve pupils' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English. Writing is one of English skills that should be mastered by the students. With using this skill learner can communicate their ideas with others in a written form. Teachers should create meaningful activities in order to engage students in the learning process. Writing is one of the most challenging skills for English Language learners. On one hand, writing can be an activity and on other hand it can be an act of communication. Because one can practice their skills of using grammar, vocabulary as an activity and also put their ideas together as an act of communication. Through writing, students can express themselves. Writing involves processing, editing, and while writing, there is more time available to the students for thinking and accessing familiar language. Writing is a very important activity and set of skills to develop as part of your academic study.

There are some activities which require that writing and speaking skills should be integrated. If teachers make students present given topics in any way students might write about topics and then speak the topic. Through this way they can present the topic. In order to motivate students to write about topics the given topics should be interesting and relevant to them and also teachers should allow them some choice: this choice may be a choice of a topic or of how to present their topic or regarding how much they should write. Writing skill can be a nice way to engage and motivate our shyer and quieter students. Hence, many consider that it is better to give the writing task in the classroom rather than giving it for homework. When writing is done in class, teachers can guide their students through the whole process. When writing is done at

home, the teacher might not know the student does the task himself or he plagiarized from the internet sources.

When topics are given to students for writing, they learn to think more deeply. During writing their assessment tasks, they need to analyze the task, read material relevant to the task, make notes and clarify their understandings, draw together different views on the topic, critically weighing these up, and so on. All these activities contribute to students' learning. The kind of learning that you are expected to engage in at university level is deep learning, in which you are expected to understand many dimensions of a topic, and how they are related to each other, to ask critical questions, and to develop your own perspectives and viewpoints. For many people, the deepest learning occurs when they try to put their thoughts into words so that others can understand. A common experience for many people is that they are not really sure what they think about a complex topic until they start writing down their thoughts. Thus, the process of writing can be seen as a means for discovering and consolidating meaning and therefore a method for learning more deeply [1].

Writing is a difficult skill to master, students do not often want continue writing process because of difficulties, rules in writing. As we know there are many factors that might inspire students to master a foreign language. So, there should be some motivational ways to inspire students to write in a foreign language. Teachers should think about these ways. For example, some students might want to learn English for their careers, to study abroad or some other factors at that time teachers can use to motivate students. In addition, all students have particular needs and interests, which teachers also can take into advantage of creating motivated writing classes and activities. In fact, research from practicing teachers shows the benefit of focusing on students' needs and interests when developing language lessons. According to Brooks and Grundy (1990, 45), «when feelings are touched learners are totally involved in the writing and appear at times to be writing above their capability» [2].

A classroom project is one of teaching activities which is used in writing. When teachers want to motivate students to write they might use this activity because it offers the opportunity to match tasks with interesting topics that are relevant to the students. The classroom project can make students work together active, involved participants in writing tasks.

Classroom activities can develop students' writing skills. Because in doing activities they think, analyze, work in together, make notes, draw together. Classroom activities will be enjoyable for students who want to win in doing the activities. The more practice students get, the more they will improve upon any skill, including writing.

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The use of new information technologies requires increasing the communicative competence of students, improving their philological preparation. Modern educational technologies are used to form the communicative competence of a schoolchild in learning another language and these technologies are the most productive for creating an educational environment that provides a person-oriented interaction of all participants in the educational process. It is obvious that using any one technology of education can show its good results. Nowadays it is proved that teaching a foreign language through only traditional methods significantly decreased the effectiveness of self-education of teachers of a foreign language. In the modern society the English lessons should be taught with modern educational technologies. Using video method is one of the modern educational methods which is used in modern English lessons to teach writing.

Using video. Through the use of video students are engaged in writing. Teacher shows English movies, programs then students have an intent to write stories, essays, opinions based on the movie or programs. Videos attract students' attention. Videos engage students of all ages and abilities. Young and old students are attracted to a video and most people see them as a treat when used in a class. One of the biggest advantages of using video in a class is its ability to motivate students. Motivated students try to learn in a class after watching the video with interest. Also, videos can bring the outside world to students, it introduces different cultures, new places and ideas. Videos give students the opportunity to learn about a whole range of subjects and ideas and to learn English. Teachers should pay attention to select video material carefully. They should consider the age, language level, and interests of the students when choosing the video material. Young learners like to watch cartoons with stories of fun characters, while teenagers and adult learners are interested in documentary style films, humorous videos or content that relates to their interests or work. It is also important to consider selecting content-if the video content is too complex learners will come across difficulties to understand the video and they lose motivation and interest. On the contrary, if it is too easy, they will also get bored.

Adding drama. When students read dramas, they become interested in the life and world of a character. They give their opinions about the character of the drama, do some debates, discussions in a group. After the debates they will write essays about the character. Hence, dramas make students describe their understanding of a text and show their ability to express their opinions in a written form. For example: a teacher will give O. Wilde's drama "An Ideal Husband" to read to students. After becoming familiar with the drama "An Ideal Husband", teacher can make students write essay according to the following themes:

- a) My favorite character in the drama "An Ideal Husband";
- b) My opinions about the drama;
- c) My favorite drama.

Students will choose one of the themes according to their interests. During writing an essay, students try to describe their opinion about the comedy, characters of the comedy and they want to show their favourite character, give reasons why they chose this or that character as their favourite one.

Writing Letters. Letters of complaint (while studying consumerism), cover letters (while preparing for employment), or letters of advice (while studying newspaper features) allow learners to practice some of the types of writing that are useful in their daily lives. It is known that letters of complaint are considered formal letters. There is an explanation of layout of a formal letter:

Writing a formal letter is like going to a wedding: there are certain conventions that you should respect. The 'formal dress' of a letter is the layout; you may also be expected to use certain fixed 'politeness' phrases. If you do not respect these conventions, your letter will certainly be taken less seriously and will possibly offend, upset or confuse your correspondent. The letter below illustrates the standard layout. There are notes about the layout on the next page.

1 Open Door School of English
2 Rua Boa Morte 2 181
13400-1 40 Piracicaba
Est. de Silo Paulo
Brazil
3 tel. (0 194) 22- 3487
4 The Manager
5 Boatrace International Bookshop
37 Morse Avenue
OXFORD OX3 3DP 6 24 August 1999
7 Dear Sir or Madam
6 24 August 1999

8 On 23 June I ordered 16 copies of 'In at the Deep End' by Vicki Hollett. to be sent to me at the above address.

9 Two months later, these books have not yet been received.

10 I would be grateful if you could look into this matter and ensure that the books reach me as soon as possible.

11 Yours faithfully
12 Celia Silveira Coelho
13 CELIA SILVEIRA COELHO
14 Director
15 Notes on the layout of a formal letter
1. Your address, but not your name.

2. When writing by hand, make sure your address is legible. To someone who doesn't know your country or language, your address will appear to be a meaningless jumble of letters and numbers.

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3. Your telephone number may be important - remember, you're trying to communicate with these people.

4. The name of the person you are writing to (if you know it) followed by their position. The Manager is a good all-purpose option.

5. The address of the people you're writing to.

6. The date.

7. If you don't know the name of the person you're writing to, you can use Dear Sir, Dear Madam, Dear Sir or Madam, Dear Sir / Madam. If you do know the name, use it. But make sure you spell it correctly. Then use Dear Mr. Blair (never Mister); Dear Mrs. Peacock (a married woman); Dear Miss Ball (an unmarried woman); Dear Ms. Metcalfe (a woman who chooses not to advertise her marital status, or whose marital status you don't know); Dear Mr. and Mrs. Bessin. If your correspondent has a title other than these, use it.

Dear Dr Jekyll Dear Professor Hager

8. Reference. This sentence should tell your correspondent exactly what you are writing about. If you are replying to a letter, mention the date of that letter.

9. The substance of your letter.

10. How you want your correspondent to respond to your letter.

11. Yours sincerely if you started with a name: Dear Mr. Smith

Yours faithfully if you did not know the name: Dear Sir or Madam.

12. Your signature, always written by hand.

13. Your name, in capitals when writing by hand. It must be legible because this is the only place your name is written: it appears neither at the top of the letter nor on the back of the envelope.

14. Position. Only used when writing from a business.

15. On this line you may write:

Enc or Encs (followed by a list of enclosures - documents which you are sending together with the letter.)

P.S. (followed by information that you forgot to include in the main body of the letter - not a sign of a well-organized piece of writing! [5, 87].

In conclusion we can say, that learning to write in a foreign language is a demanding task that can easily leave students unmotivated. In order to develop students' writing in a foreign language, firstly, teacher should motivate them. If students have not any wish, intend to write they cannot accomplish in writing. Secondly, teacher should know how to apply their knowledge of current theories and methods to make writing instruction more successful. For example, if the teacher knows students how much well and this approach helps the teacher to find students' difficulties in writing. If the interaction between teacher and students is friendly students do not shy asking how to write something. Additionally, teacher should know how to apply the principles of project work to a writing task. The end result is motivated students who are pleased that they have created something that is useful and has a significant meaning.

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